

THE COMPLETION PROCESS

THE PRACTICE OF PUTTING YOURSELF
BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

TEAL SWAN

Author of Shadows Before Dawn

Praise for *The Completion Process*

“Teal does it again! Her extraordinary process will save you years of physiological and emotional struggle. She teaches you to go into your pain fearlessly instead of running from it, and to find the causes and solutions to everything that keeps you from a fulfilling life. She will help you recover your soul and write a new story for your life!”

— **Alberto Villoldo, Ph.D.**, best-selling author of *One Spirit Medicine* and *Shaman, Healer, Sage*

“*The Completion Process* is a must-read for anyone who has experienced trauma of any kind. Teal Swan brilliantly provides us with the necessary information about how we become branded by highly charged emotional events and then, from personal experience, she offers us a true healing process by giving us the practical tools to apply to our lives. This book will free you from your past.”

— **Dr. Joe Dispenza**, *New York Times* best-selling author of *You ARE the Placebo*

THE
COMPLETION
PROCESS

ALSO BY TEAL SWAN

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*Freedom . . . is in the reclaiming of self.
The turning of life's cyanide into honey.
And liberty, the pinnacle of color
sketched to a world full of petals,
all of which grow from soil.
Perchance the squalid circumstances
of our given lives,
were none but a call to ripen.
For the life within a life is transcendental.
Forever searching out the ways the world has bisected us . . .
In order to unite us again,
with a kind of soundness so brave,
it drowns out the throe.
So you can see that beauty
in its most absolute forms,
is not virgin to rancor.
Instead . . .
It becomes from it.*

—TEAL SWAN

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INTRODUCTION

The year was 2001. I was sitting in a hole, my wrists and ankles tied together. I can't say that I was afraid, because the years of abuse leading up to that point had desensitized me to danger. It was more that I had given up on life. I didn't see the point. I had conceded to the reality that my life was a torture chamber made for one, and I was never going to get out alive.

When I was in grade school, I had been targeted by a family acquaintance who, unbeknownst to my parents, was a psychopath. Outwardly he presented himself as a respected community leader and health professional, but he had a much darker side. Only a few people knew he participated in cult rituals. He became my childhood mentor and gained unfettered access to me. My parents trusted him and were unaware that my relationship with him was built on torture. They saw most of the red flags but misinterpreted them. My abuser threatened to kill my family if I ever told anyone what he did, and I knew he was fully capable of murder. The ritual abuse lasted for 13 years.

I spent a lot of time sitting in that hole in the ground. Nicknamed "the mind space," it was just large enough for a person to sit in. Covering the hole was a nailed-together lattice of weathered wood. In the summers, the bottom of the hole was lined with stinging nettle. This was his idea of a way to "train my mind." Before I was put into the space, I was usually stripped naked and my wrists and ankles were tied together. I had no idea how long he was going to leave me there. I had no idea whether he would decide to keep me indefinitely, kill me, or return me to my parents later that night.

Despite the pain of uncertainty, I had been confined to this hellhole so many times it felt routine. I was acclimated to suffering—except for one thing. Going into the mind space meant I had to be alone with myself, and I couldn't bear it. I felt only the emptiness within me. Even worse than emptiness, it was a complete void, its edges colored by grief.

For years I did everything I could to avoid that grief and to distance myself from that void. And then something happened. Sitting in the mind space one day, I felt the by then familiar desperation. But this time was different. I realized that

if there was movement in my feeling of desperation, the movement meant that I was traveling toward a new emotion. The more I thought about desperation, the clearer it became that movement toward something had to be toward something *wanted* and away from something *unwanted*.

So I began to ask myself the question, “What is it internally that I don’t want?” More than that, “What is it that I am internally moving away from?” Lo and behold, I discovered that my sense of “desperation” was actually keeping me from feeling despair, from a complete absence of hope. Losing hope is the most intense feeling of powerlessness in the range of human emotions. Some part of me was convinced that slipping into *despair* meant death, so that part of me had been resisting *despair* in order to survive.

I could say that I decided to be brave that day, but really I had just given up hope. I was standing on the edge of a precipice. I was emotionally exhausted from almost 13 years of torture. Despair was like a tornado that chased me no matter where I ran, and I was tired of running. I wanted death. And so I did the opposite of what I had always done. I turned around and I ran straight into the tornado. I committed emotional suicide. I didn’t know what would happen, but I did it anyway. I was in for a surprise.

For a moment, I drowned in the misery of heavy anguish. It felt like I was being crushed, bruised, and broken. I took a breath. Instead of pulling away from it, I went deeper; I gave the feeling permission to consume me. I allowed it as if it had a valid reason to be there. And soon, like sunrays penetrating the depths of the ocean, I experienced a lightness of being. I felt relief. The fear of the feeling itself was evaporated by my choice to dive into the feeling instead.

I spent some time basking in that relief. It was the first time in my life that I had not abandoned myself. At that point, I had no idea why what I had done worked. I just knew that it did. And so I tried it again and again. I tried it almost every time I was confronted with an uncomfortable feeling that I was tempted to run away from.

Eventually I managed to escape from the man who had stolen my childhood, and for years after that, I tried to heal. In the years that followed, I tried to understand exactly *why* the technique I’d stumbled upon had worked. Once I understood how I had actually healed myself, I realized this was a breakthrough that could really change the world.

The timing could not have been better. So many souls in this world need healing, and I had discovered that it all starts with really *feeling* our emotions. In the womb, we humans felt sensations from the world before we even saw it. When we first come into this life as tiny babies, we experience the world entirely through perception. As we proceed through life, we carry the emotional tone of

our childhood into our adulthood. It's a learned vibrational state that we build upon and add to.

In essence, we learn to relate to people through this emotional tone. This is positive if the emotional tone of our childhood is positive. But if the emotional tone of our childhood is negative and painful, this negative and painful emotional state will be the filter through which we perceive the world as adults. It will be the emotional baseline trauma that we never seem to get over. We will spend our lives trying to "fix" ourselves with little to no success.

In my case, I attended trauma therapy for five years with a few therapists who specialized in ritual trauma. I was exposed to the typical modalities and the most up-to-date therapies within that field, and I figured out what worked and what didn't.

While working with traditional trauma therapy, I was introduced to the concept of inner-child work, and it was a revelation for me. The theory behind inner-child work as a healing modality is that all people on earth hold within themselves the essence of the children we once were. As we matured, one part of us grew up but the other part stayed a child. This inner child symbolizes our emotional selves. Regardless of your childhood experiences, good or bad, the adult part of you grew up, despite not getting everything it needed as a child. Therefore, your adult self holds the key to healing.

But when I was in trauma therapy myself, the way I was doing inner-child work never made me feel complete. It wasn't until I already had a successful international career as a spiritual luminary that I came to completely understand why the technique that I had discovered in the mind space *worked*. And why inner-child work *worked*. And even more importantly, and this is the crux—*how they fit together*.

I realized that I had found the holy grail. I began to design a process, one that would help make even the most wounded and fractured person whole again. I perfected the process by using it on myself first and then with my clients. My wish for you is that you experience the kind of joyous life that is available only to those who are willing to courageously journey deep within themselves, resurrecting the aspects of themselves that have been lost. After all, if this process can heal a survivor of complex ritual abuse, it can heal anyone. I call this approach the *Completion Process*.



ATTUNEMENT



SEEKING THE GREAT RECONCILIATION

The Completion Process is the doorway to liberation. It's a way to put yourself back together again so you are no longer inhibited by the past or terrified of the future. This process is for anyone; we all have past hurts in our lives that need healing, and often we cannot see that the symptoms we experience in our current life are connected to these past hurts. But they are. We have simply not connected the dots.

Most of us wish that our world was a platform for harmony and for pleasure. The reality, however, is that while there is harmony and pleasure here on earth, there is also conflict and suffering. Every day traumatized soldiers return from war. Inhabitants of war-torn areas struggle to pick up the broken pieces of their lives and move forward. Children are abused, women are raped, and natural disasters leave people with nothing. Emergency teams, such as ER doctors, first responders, and firefighters, assist others through horrific circumstances and often find it difficult to process the distress of what they have experienced. Others succumb to addiction to try to drown out the pain of emptiness. All of the difficult circumstances that we struggle with have one thing in common: *trauma*.

The symptoms of trauma can manifest as flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia, paralyzing fear, addictions, anxiety, or depression, as well as unrelenting thoughts about a specific past event or series of events. Some people may find themselves struggling with low self-esteem, issues of self-harm, chronic pain, mental illness, or just a generally unsatisfying or painful life. Often a person

does not know what is causing their symptoms. They don't have any idea that it's connected to an unresolved experience. Most painful episodes like these have their origins in childhood trauma. A person might not even be consciously aware of the trauma, even when it causes serious grief in day-to-day life. As current psychology modalities are beginning to recognize this, therapists' approach with patients is slowly but surely switching from "What's wrong with you?" to "What happened to you?"

No one is immune to trauma. I have used the Completion Process with people, from children to adults, living all over the world, from many different cultures, in various stages of life, and on all types of career paths. In my own practice, I have used it to bring about resolve and integration for people who are grieving; who are struggling with mental illnesses, addictions, weight issues, chronic or terminal illness; or who are recovering from childhood sexual abuse. Sometimes clients can't seem to make their relationships work or they lack a sense of purpose. It has also been very effective for people who are struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of trauma from wars, accidents, disasters, or personal tragedy.

This book is designed to lead you into this process so you can understand it, experience it, let your life be transformed by it, and even use it to transform the lives of others who might ask for your help.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This first section is called *Part I: Attunement*, and the following four chapters explain the rationale behind this process, particularly how the human mind works with regard to the processing of memories, emotions, and trauma. It's important for you to understand this context so that the actual steps in the Completion Process will make sense. In *Part I*, you will notice that I use examples from my own life, and from clients I have worked with, to help you further understand the universal truths.

The Completion Process itself is made up of 18 steps that I have listed and expanded upon in *Part II: Completion*. For each step, I provide the reason for it, how to proceed through it, and what to do if certain emotions or reactions arise. I have written it in this way so you can walk through the Completion Process on your own or engage a caring friend or certified practitioner to walk through each step with you.

Please note that the Completion Process is designed to flow sequentially so that one step naturally leads to the next from start to finish, from Steps 1 to 18.

However, for the sake of comprehension, I have broken up my explanation of the process into three separate chapters. [Chapter 6](#) covers Steps 1–6 and pertains to the part of the process where we are re-experiencing a memory that is causing us pain in our current life. [Chapter 7](#) deals with Steps 7–13 and discusses the part of the process where we alter the memory itself for the purpose of healing. [Chapter 8](#) details Steps 14–18, which pertain to the part of the process when we rescue ourselves from the memory and bring ourselves into congruence with our current timeline.

In [Part III: Reconciliation](#), I am honored to share a number of dramatic personal testimonials about the Completion Process in the words of participants and facilitators from around the world. Woven in with those stories in [Chapter 9](#) is commentary about the many benefits that the Completion Process brings to those who have used it and those who continue to use it in their daily lives.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO “COMPLETE”?

Life is unpredictable. You may experience phases where you feel as if you finally have it all together, only to have it all turned upside down. You may suddenly feel like a train that has been run off its track or that you are heading up the creek without a paddle. When you are heading for a train wreck or find yourself floating along in utter chaos, it can be a sign that you need to seek re-integration. All of these experiences are valid and necessary; they are part of our development, so learning about them can be fascinating and very beneficial.

Once you learn to pay attention to the triggers of your memories and take time to deal with the core issue, then you can finally heal. The trigger is an important concept, so let me take a few minutes to explain it. A trigger is anything that helps you recall or bring to the surface a traumatic memory from your past. It can be a word, a tone of voice, a smell, a sensation, a face, a place, or any situation or thing that causes you to feel unsettled or fearful. You might not even know what is causing you to suddenly feel sick, hurt, anxious, or uneasy, but your subconscious mind knows.

In this way, a trigger is a reminder of a previous wound and it is a signal to address the issue. Triggers are not negative or unwanted in this scenario; rather, they are an invitation for you to re-integrate fractured aspects back into your being. In essence, the Completion Process is a practical and powerful way to use triggers to re-integrate the fractured aspects of yourself and become whole again.

This approach will make more sense as you continue reading, but for now, just think of yourself as a river and the parts of your childhood self that fractured due

to traumatic events are like streams branching off the river.

In nature, the more streams that re-integrate with the river, the more water is available to the river. Since your consciousness is, in fact, a huge stream of energy, each time you re-integrate a lost part of yourself, you will have more energy and enjoy a greater level of consciousness than you had before the re-integration. When you become OK with the fact that you are a masterpiece that's always a work in progress, you will learn to find peace and also joy in this continual expansion. Rest assured, the better it gets, *the better it gets*.

But since it is an ongoing process, please don't confuse "completion" with "finished." Each time you reach a new level of enlightenment, there's always more expansion on the horizon; there is no such thing as an enlightened retirement. The great beauty of our lives is that we are never truly in a "finished" state.

Don't be discouraged by the fact that uncovering our true selves is a continual process, a process that has no end. Once you begin to uncover yourself, you will find that you were born with freedom, you were born with integrity, you were born with joy, and you were born with love; you've simply been conditioned to forget all these gifts.

LEARNING TO TALK THIS TALK

The Completion Process brings your past wounds to a point of healing. Again, I'm being careful with the words I'm using. In this context, "wounds" are not gashes with blood oozing from them, but rather, I use the word "wounds" to represent any unhealed emotional, mental, or physical struggle you may be contending with.

Even the word "healing" can be a bit misleading. Generally "healing" implies that something is not OK as it is. This, in and of itself, is the primary "wound" that all of us carry: *something from our past is not OK*. The beauty of the Completion Process is that the very thing doing the healing is the *presence of consciousness in the form of attention* that you are offering to that wound. By being unconditionally present with an inner wound, you are finally making it OK to *feel exactly how you feel*. As you proceed through this process, you'll come to know this concept very well.

As we apply the Completion Process, we are not needing or asking our emotions to change. Our emotions change precisely because we are *not* asking them or forcing them to do anything. We are giving ourselves unconditional, focused presence and, therefore, unconditional love. These actions transform us

into who and what we really are. It allows us to become whole and restore our integrity.

All those who commit to the Completion Process commit to a healing process during which the layers concealing their true selves are peeled back, ending the cycle of suffering in their lives. It's not that we no longer feel negative emotion; it's that negative emotion no longer causes us to suffer in the ways it once did.

WHAT THE COMPLETION PROCESS MIGHT FEEL LIKE

As a healer, I am overjoyed when I get feedback from past clients. I am including a client story here so you can get a sense of what this process feels like and what it can deliver. This client's trauma may be very different from yours, but the process works the same way with whatever trauma you are trying to resolve.

I got to know this client (whom I will call Joanna) quite well along the way. Although I know her story inside out, I believe it is more impactful to hear her in her own voice.

Joanna is crystal clear about the role the Completion Process has played in her life. "It has been a lifesaving tool for me. I was a zombie of a person before finding it," she began. "My life used to be so painful that I didn't want to live. I was in so much pain every day that I did not know what happiness or joy or fun was. They were concepts so far away from my reality that I had even forgotten they were possible. It felt like my life was impossible. No matter what I did I could not get away from my hell. My past was always present with me and I could not escape the years of sexual abuse and depression."

When I met her, Joanna told me that she felt powerless in relation to both her past and her present, and this was impacting virtually all aspects of her life. "My depression made it so that I was in bed most days, and if I wasn't, I really wanted to be. I wanted nothing to do with the outside world. How could I deal with the outside world when my internal world was a living hell? Every day I would wish I could just die. Either something had to drastically change or I was convinced *I would die*. That is when the Completion Process entered my life.

"When I first started the process, it became obvious I had a long way to go. I was not in my body, and I had no memories, so I had to start with baby steps by breathing myself back into my body. But that was OK because it felt better than where I had been. It felt so much better, in fact, that soon the Completion

Process became my new ‘go-to’ technique whenever I felt like I could not handle life. This process is not easy; you are going to have to relive everything you have been avoiding your whole life, but it is very much worth it. I have used this process on some of my most terrifying memories.”

Courageously, Joanna is now able to tell her whole story. She wants to share this story with others because she feels that if she is able to reveal her truth, she may be able to help others who face their own very dark and horrific situations. “There was an instant that I had to use the Completion Process after a trigger,” says Joanna, “And I saw rape scene after rape scene come up. I wanted so badly to run the other way, but I stayed with the process and continued through it until the end, and what I found was that, as painful as each and every scene was, *I could live through it*. After that incredible and intense experience, I realized that I could now live life and that there was more than just darkness to experience.”

What happened was that once Joanna’s past no longer had a hold on her, she was not destined to live with the pain every single day. Speaking confidently, she concludes: “I now feel like a person instead of a shell of a person. I have had so many fantastic moments because this process has allowed me to leave my past where it belongs: *in the past*. This process has been the light at the end of the tunnel for me, giving me hope to what I thought was a hopeless situation, bringing me back to life.”

ARE YOU A MATCH TO THIS PROCESS?

Like Joanna, you’ve now found the Completion Process within this book, which means that you or someone you know and love is a match to this process. Otherwise the Universe would not have put these words in your hands. Now is the time to learn how to really be present with yourself and figure out if you are ready to “go back” and care for yourself.

Consider what is rising up within you right now. Your body needs you. Your mind needs you. Your feelings need you. Your painful perceptions need you. The wounded children within you need you. Your suffering needs you. It is time to really be there for all of these parts that have been crying out to you for so long.

You’ve suffered because you haven’t been touched by compassion and understanding. You’ve suffered because you haven’t been touched by unconditional love. This has been happening because you’ve been giving yourself the message that you only want to be present with yourself in the moment if your life is going well and if you are feeling positive emotion. This has made you a fair-weather friend to yourself. More than that, you have set

conditions for loving yourself. This is the deepest form of betrayal. It's yet another wound that we collectively carry. Now you have the opportunity to heal these wounds and reconcile with yourself.

THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

Everyone on earth, regardless of how good his or her childhood may have been, has experienced trauma; therefore, everyone experiences post-traumatic stress to some degree. The people who know for sure that they have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are the ones experiencing post-traumatic stress to such a degree that it interferes with their ability to function; thus they have been given an actual diagnosis. But as humans, we all have it to some degree. Understanding how this happens starts with understanding the human mind.

The physical human was created with a subconscious and a conscious mind. We call the part of the mind that controls all autonomic aspects of living the *subconscious mind*. The subconscious mind is in control of things like your heartbeat, body temperature, and digestion. You don't have to think about your heart beating in order for it to beat.

Your subconscious mind is in control of everything that is not being attended to by your conscious mind. If we had to think about keeping our hearts beating, digesting food, and our beliefs, we couldn't focus. Focusing is what enables us to create, to learn, and to evolve. Focusing is what the conscious mind does best.

The subconscious mind is in charge of your beliefs, all of your previous life experiences, your memories, and the skills you've already acquired. The subconscious mind takes control of anything that is learned, so a person can focus on other important things in his or her life. If you think a thought enough times, the subconscious mind takes it over and it becomes automatic. The best way to understand this aspect of the subconscious mind is to think about an Olympic swimmer. When the swimmer was just learning to swim, she could not think about anything else while she was swimming. She had to intently focus on each stroke. After some time, she could do the strokes automatically, and now that she is an Olympic swimmer, she can execute the backstroke so well she doesn't have to think about how to do it. She can do the backstroke and plan dinner at the same time.

This same elite athlete may have a hard time teaching a beginner how to do the backstroke because she learned how to do it so long ago. Her subconscious mind took over the action many years earlier, so she lost conscious awareness of *how* to swim the stroke. It's simply that automatic. Your subconscious mind,

then, is your living, breathing version of autopilot.

As it applies to the Completion Process, we must understand a crucial truth about the subconscious mind. *The subconscious mind takes over control of anything that interferes with the conscious mind.* This is where the subconscious mind is capable of both keeping us alive and destroying our lives. The subconscious mind is the reason we don't have to think about jumping out of the way of an oncoming train when it's barreling toward us.

But there are other times when the subconscious mind takes over things for the sake of survival, and this mechanism that benefits us in the short term can harm us immensely in the long term. One example of this is our belief system. If your parents got a divorce when you were young, you might decide that it's dangerous to love anyone because you'll lose them.

If the pain you felt about this matter interfered with your life enough, the subconscious mind might own that belief. You would then have no conscious awareness of your original thought or belief. You would simply observe that the minute you get too close or intimate with someone, you pull away and end the relationship. As a grown person, you're only aware of the *symptom*; the root cause of that symptom remains deeply buried in your subconscious mind. In this way, your subconscious mind takes over your thoughts and emotions, and when situations are extreme, it can take over entire memories that are a *threat* to your conscious mind.

HOW MEMORIES ARE SUPPRESSED

Suppressed memory (also known as repressed memory) is currently a controversial topic in the field of psychology. A suppressed memory occurs when a situation is associated with a high level of trauma or stress, and the memory of the entire situation is unconsciously blocked so that the person has no memory of it at all. Even though the memory affects that person on a conscious level, they have no ability to recall the specific memory.

Some people in the field of psychology dispute the concept of suppressed memory, while others support it wholeheartedly. I'm one of the supporters. Suppressed memory is real, and I believe that just about everyone has experienced it. The question isn't whether or not someone has suppressed memory. The real question is: *To what degree?*

To understand more about suppressed memories, you need to understand how trauma works. Trauma is merely a state of emotional and mental distress caused by an experience. And trauma is not necessarily a veritable tragedy. For

example, it's traumatic to experience birth in today's mainstream medical facilities. It's traumatic to a baby to be weaned from its mother's milk. It's traumatic to a three-year-old to lose track of his mother in a grocery store. With this broad definition of trauma, you can see that even the best parents on earth couldn't raise a child in a way that the child will experience absolutely no trauma. And be aware that what might seem like a somewhat minor trauma, such as perhaps a childhood disappointment, does *not* feel minor when you're experiencing it.

When someone experiences an event that is emotionally traumatizing, sometimes she has no way to integrate the event into her conscious life. When this happens, for the sake of her emotional survival, the person often entirely suppresses the memory. The memory is then dissociated from the self and stored in a fragmented way.

Let me explain what I mean by *fragmented*. A memory is accompanied by senses, such as sound, taste, smell, sight, and emotion. When a situation is particularly traumatizing, the sensory aspects of a memory are often stored separately. For example, the mind suppresses the *images* associated with the memory deeper than the *emotions* associated with the memory. For this reason, people who recover suppressed memories often perceive them or begin to remember them in fragments, which is why it can be so confusing to go through the process of recovering them.

For example, a person who has been sexually abused in childhood may have no memory of the actual event. But because the mind didn't suppress the scent aspect of the memory or the emotional aspect of the memory as deeply as the visual images associated with that memory, the person (now an adult) may be easily triggered by a smell. He might be innocently walking down a grocery store aisle with no conscious awareness of any past abuse, and then smell the same cologne that the childhood abuser used to wear. The scent can be really unpleasant, causing nausea or even an anxiety attack.

The smell of the cologne brings back the terror (the emotional aspect) of the memory, but because the person doesn't consciously recall the whole memory, he doesn't recognize the trigger. The wave of nausea or panic seems to have come out of the blue, and because the reaction seems completely random, the person might think he is going crazy.

It serves the mind to dissociate when it experiences something traumatic. Let me explain this concept because it is important to understanding the Completion Process. A dissociative state is a psychological state when someone separates from an experience. In this way, dissociation is a defense mechanism or coping mechanism that enables us to avoid unpleasant experiences. There are mild and

severe forms of it.

Dissociation can be seen on a spectrum the same way that trauma can. At the mildest end of dissociation, a person could simply daydream instead of focusing on what they are doing or experiencing in the moment. Or a person might go numb. At the severe end of the dissociation spectrum, a person might completely detach from reality and start to experience periods of time when they lose a sense of identity or create new identities. This is sometimes seen when someone has experienced ritual abuse, sexual abuse, or the ravages of war.

Now we understand that when dissociation is viewed on a spectrum, on one side you might have a person rejecting her feelings of anger, and on the other side, you might have a person separating from her entire identity in order to escape a horrific event. Any kind of dissociation creates a split within the person, between her conscious self and her subconscious self. If dissociation happens frequently, we will have *many splits* within ourselves.

By dissociating from an experience, you push it out of your awareness so you don't have to endure the pain or discomfort of the feelings associated with the event. It also serves the mind because it prioritizes survival—not just physical survival, but also mental and emotional survival. If you were a small child dependent upon someone who was abusing you, you would have no choice but to remain attached to that person.

In essence, the cognitive dissonance associated with “living with the monster” is so great that you actually could not go on living in the atmosphere of that much terror. So, by suppressing the memory of the abuse, you maintain your attachment to the adult who is abusing you and thus ensure your survival.

As you work through the Completion Process, you may well recover many memories you have forgotten and additional details about memories you already consciously remember. You will see just how traumatizing certain experiences were in your past and just how much of your current life has been shaped by those experiences.

THE REJECTED SELF DOESN'T GO AWAY

We are born whole, but that wholeness is short-lived because we are relationally dependent. Being born relationally dependent into families that socialize us into a society that is not fully evolved can be problematic. This is because we learn that some aspects of ourselves are acceptable and others are not. What is acceptable or unacceptable depends on the perspective of the family you're born into.

The aspects of us that are seen as unacceptable (both positive and negative) are rejected by our family members, and the aspects that are seen as acceptable are welcomed. So, because we are relationally dependent, we will do anything in the name of survival to reject (and therefore suppress) those aspects of ourselves that are *disapproved* of while exaggerating those that are *approved* of.

The self-preservation instinct to dissociate is in fact our first act of self-rejection. For example, consider a child who's born into a family where anger isn't an acceptable emotion to express. When the child gets angry, he is shamed, so he suppresses and denies his anger for the sake of survival within the household. Over time, the anger becomes subconscious.

As an adult, that same person most likely will not have any awareness that he has anger within himself. He will not and cannot see himself clearly because he has rejected that aspect of himself. So when people tell him that he seems angry, he won't relate at all. He will probably think of himself only as easygoing.

So now we know that when we reject (and therefore suppress) something, *it doesn't disappear*. It just fades from our awareness. To acknowledge the suppressed memory, you will bring up the same fear of rejection that you suppressed earlier in your life, and you may well feel like you are going to die. No wonder total self-awareness is so difficult to attain.

Everyone who was ever socialized (which is all of us) went through this process of splitting themselves into parts. We grow up with some parts of the self that are owned and other parts that are rejected. This self-rejection is the birth of self-hate. The emptiness that we feel is the result of those rejected (and therefore suppressed) parts of ourselves. Your soul wants only one thing, and that is to make you whole again.

As you proceed through life, you'll be provided with every opportunity to become whole again. But in order to return to wholeness, you need to see and accept the aspects of yourself that were rejected and suppressed along the way. I know firsthand that this is incredibly painful. Self-awareness doesn't come naturally to those who avoid pain because to become aware of those lost aspects, you must stop trying to escape the emptiness within you where those missing parts should be.

ATTRACTION AND PROJECTION

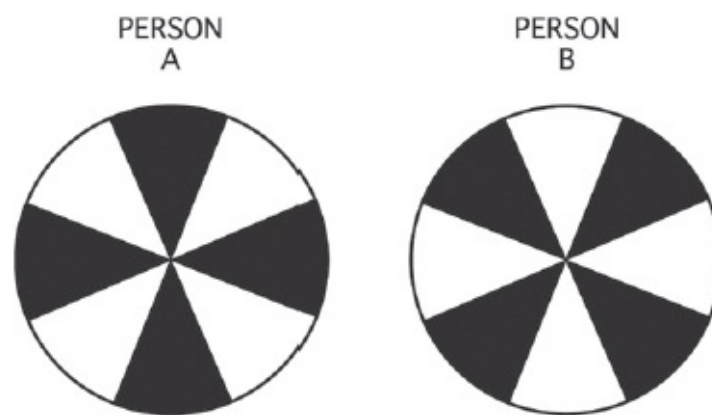
What happens after years of self-rejection? You may well overcompensate for whatever trait you have rejected (and therefore suppressed). For example, the person who suppresses the aspect of herself that is a striver becomes apathetic.

The person who suppresses the aspect of herself that is apathetic becomes such a striver that she excels at everything. The Law of Attraction applies to all our extremes. We are matches to those who mirror the aspect of ourselves that we have suppressed. We are attracted to them, even though they seem to be our opposite, because the rejected part of ourself is still deeply hidden.

This is why our partners (or those who are closest to us) tend to be our opposing mirrors. They reflect the attribute that we have suppressed, and we reflect the aspect that they have suppressed. This means the person who is apathetic will end up with an ambitious person, and both of them will be caused pain by the other because each is a reminder of the rejected aspect of themselves.

To better understand the idea of the lost self as it applies to attraction, look at the two diagrams below. The white aspects of the circle (the white pieces of the pie) represent the conscious, whereas the black aspects represent the subconscious. If the circles for Person A and Person B were completely white, they would be fully conscious. But they are not; each has a number of black pie pieces representing some aspect of their subconscious, some aspect that has been rejected and suppressed. Each of us is naturally compelled to be whole, and so we are attracted to the conscious aspects in another person that are subconscious within ourselves.

Notice how the two circles are polarized? Together they make a whole, a completely white circle. This is the substitute for being whole in and of the self. Each person reflects to the other person what is missing within the self.



The crucial thing to understand is that we can see the things in other people that we are totally unaware of in ourselves. This is the essence of projection. When we see our own negative aspects (those that we ourselves had previously rejected) show up in others, it triggers a response. We have the same reaction to that aspect that we had to it long ago: reject it, hate it, get rid of it, do anything to avoid it!

On the other hand, when we see our own positive aspects (that we had previously rejected) show up in another person, we fall in love because it feels like our opportunity to become whole. We want more of it. We become addicted to it. We glorify it, put it on a pedestal, and even idolize it. This is what is happening when you see crowds of screaming girls at pop stars' concerts. The girls are projecting the positive aspects that they have rejected in themselves—usually a sense of significance—onto the person on stage.

The main characteristic of the rejected aspects of yourself are their complete invisibility to you and their complete visibility to others. Guess what? This is how it's supposed to work if you've suppressed an aspect of your wholeness. Projecting doesn't make you wrong or bad; it makes you normal.

Here is the important lesson: Any extreme aversion to a trait in another person is a reflection of the level of rejection you developed toward that trait or the potential of that trait within yourself. The more you hate something in someone else, the more you rejected that same trait within yourself long ago. And the more you love something you see in someone else, the more you rejected it in yourself long ago.

CLARIFYING THE MATTER OF PROJECTION

In our culture, there is a common misunderstanding about projection that I'd like to clear up. It has been suggested that we project our own rejected self onto someone who *doesn't* have the same traits at all. But this isn't how it works; projection is almost always a two-way street.

Often what we project onto someone actually *is* a trait that they possess. We may or may not exhibit that same trait. But either way, we recognize the trait because seeing it causes a flare-up of the wound left behind as a result of *rejecting* that aspect within ourselves. Also, when someone projects something upon us, we *have* to be a vibrational match to that experience. In other words, the experience of being projected upon is also reflecting something that is being rejected within us.

Projection has become one of the most common deflection techniques of all time. Many people use it as a cop-out, as a convenient way to avoid taking an objective look at yourself. Simply say, "You're projecting," to anyone who approaches you with a negative aspect that they see in you.

But the truth is, you can't consciously and clearly see another person until you are completely conscious of yourself. Otherwise you'll continue to see everyone else through the filter of your own subconscious mind. Every time we refuse to

look at ourselves and every time we hide that fact by saying, “You’re just projecting,” we miss the opportunity to see ourselves clearly. We also miss the opportunity to see our world and each other clearly.

Everyone projects. So our goal shouldn’t be to stop projecting, but rather our goal should be to become as self-aware as possible. It’s far better to view our extreme negative reactions to other people, and our extreme positive ones, as the *perfect opportunity* to develop our own self-awareness.

Furthermore, it’s not healthy to continue to judge others or reject aspects of them; the more we reject something in another, the more we exacerbate our own wounds. By rejecting something in them, we are re-rejecting it yet again within ourselves. This is another reason to face and resolve hidden aspects of ourselves, rather than let them harm us over and over again.

If parts of ourselves continue to be rejected (and suppressed), we become *inauthentic*. We’re no longer our true selves. We become a walking façade that we think is the real us, which is an acutely painful state. Eventually we have what I call “break-through symptoms.” This is an important concept to understand, and I usually describe it this way: The façade you show the outside world is like a strip of cellophane. When the pressure of a suppressed aspect of yourself becomes intense enough, it bubbles up and pushes through your façade, causing it to rip or tear like a piece of cellophane. At this point, we say it has broken through.

The suppressed aspects within you are hidden from plain view. But when pressure causes them to break through, they appear visibly as physical symptoms. For example, someone may have suppressed his feelings of anger, and most of the time, it’s under tight wraps. But given enough pressure, that anger bubbles up to the surface and manifests itself as a skin rash. This rash is an example of a break-through symptom. In truth, all visible symptoms are indicators of a deeper issue. We can think of them as red flags alerting us to where our conscious attention is needed.

Break-through symptoms begin to bother us when we are in a place in our lives when the original threat that caused us to dissociate and fracture ourselves is no longer present. That’s when you might hear your soul cry out for integration because you want so much to be whole again. We are living organisms, and any living organism on this earth will trend in the direction of health. This is why you don’t have to think about healing a cut on your hand in order for the cut to heal. The natural state of your body is a state of health or wholeness, so your being will automatically start to heal itself.

In the same way, your being will try to put all the missing aspects of yourself back together again too. You’ll keep running into people and circumstances that

will highlight what is fractured within yourself so that you can heal and become whole again.

The first step is to figure out how to start resolving and recovering the missing aspects of yourself.



DIGGING UP WHAT WAS BURIED

Perhaps you have heard this before: in order to reach a state of optimal health, you must address your issues with body, mind, and soul. These three elements of a person have long been considered the pillars of a complete life. But what if I told you that this isn't quite right?

When we think of soul, we often imagine an ethereal and intangible energy. Because feelings and emotions are also ethereal and intangible, and we don't quite understand them either, we sometimes call our emotions our "soul." This is why advice about how to feed and heal your soul is usually designed to help you feel better *emotionally*.

EMOTIONAL WAKE-UP CALL

I suggest another view. In truth, our souls are innately healthy and, therefore, can't be in an *unhealthy* state. When I speak about soul, I mean that your soul is your nonphysical, eternal essence. Your soul is energy; it creates feelings and it also creates our minds and bodies. All three elements of a person are in fact composed of soul. Your body is your soul projecting itself physically. Your mind is your soul projecting itself mentally. Feelings are how a soul consciously perceives and communicates.

Following this premise, the three pillars of health are: body, mind, and

emotion—with emotion as the language of the soul. If you choose to see it this way, then the key to “soul health” is really your “emotional health.”

When we use the word *soul*, we are referring to the core aspect of a person’s being. In the English language, *soul* and *heart* are interchangeable terms. This is why someone who is speaking from the core of their being may say, “I know in my heart that (fill in the blank).” What this means is that deep down we know that the very heart of our experience in life isn’t mental or physical, it’s *feeling and emotion*.

This makes perfect sense because babies and children experience the world almost entirely through felt perception. Feeling and emotions are not only the heart of our lives here on earth, but they also form the heart of our relationships. Because feeling and emotion are the heart of relationships, they are also typically the most damaged.

RAISING CHILDREN WHO ARE HEALTHY AND WHOLE

Regardless of how far we have progressed as a society, the goal of parenting is still to have a compliant and obedient child, not to raise our children to become healthy adults. The goal is to raise a child who is “good.” Our justice system takes the exact same approach with regard to criminal behavior. We are concerned with correcting this perceived misbehavior and creating good citizens while being unconcerned with the feelings that motivate such misbehavior.

The bottom line here is that good parenting involves emotion and good relationships involve emotion. Not realizing this, most parents today make one or more crucial mistakes. First, they disapprove of their children’s emotions. Second, they dismiss their children’s emotions. Third, they offer no practical guidance to the child.

For example, imagine that young Joey doesn’t want to go to school and begins to cry when his parent tries to drop him off. The disapproving parent might scold Joey for his refusal to cooperate, or resort to calling him a brat, or punish him with a time-out or with a spanking.

The dismissive parent may brush off Joey’s emotions by saying, “That’s silly. There’s no reason to be sad about going to school; now turn that frown upside down.” The dismissive parent may even distract Joey from his emotions by giving him a cookie or pointing out a horse in a field on their way to school.

Some parents are empathetic, but offer no guidance. The empathetic parent

may tell Joey that it's OK to feel sad or scared, but that same parent wouldn't continue to help Joey decide what to do with his uncomfortable feelings. More than likely, this parent would instead leave him with the belief and feeling that his emotions are an all-consuming force that he is powerless to do anything about.

Children who are raised in unhealthy emotional environments aren't able to soothe themselves. Very often, they fail to emotionally connect with their family. If they don't develop intimacy at home, they feel desperately isolated and alone, which may also lead to health problems.

These children grow into adults who aren't capable of managing their emotions and who struggle to make relationships work. They develop powerless, codependent relationships, and while they may have a deep need for other people, they might simultaneously suffer with an extreme fear of intimacy.

In my opinion, the number one cause of sociopathic and psychopathic behavior in adults is the result of unhealthy emotional environments in childhood. Keep in mind that it's more difficult to recognize emotional dysfunction than it is to recognize overt abuse. Many of the serial killers and school shooters who came from reportedly "healthy homes" didn't in fact come from healthy homes at all. They may have come from physically healthy homes—where they were fed, clothed, and given many advantages—but underneath that lovely looking exterior was extreme emotional dysfunction so damaging that it kept them from connecting with other people.

Emotional dismissal and emotional disapproval are forms of emotional abuse. When a parent disapproves of their child's emotion or dismisses it, the child begins to accept the parent's estimation of the event and learns to doubt his or her own judgment. As a result, the child loses self-confidence. When emotional dysfunction rules the relationship, the child learns that it's wrong to feel the way that they feel.

And here's the crux of the matter: the child believes that if it's wrong to feel the way they feel, but they feel that way anyway, they become convinced that something must be *wrong* with them.

LONG-TERM DAMAGE

It's not the uncomfortable feelings themselves that hurt, it's our *resistance* to the uncomfortable feelings that causes us pain. Psychiatrists' offices are full of people who were raised in emotionally dysfunctional homes. These people grow up to believe that there's something wrong with them because they "shouldn't

feel how they feel”; in actuality, they should feel exactly how they feel. They have perfect and sound reasons to feel how they feel, and the idea that something is “wrong with them” is a fallacy that is the by-product of having their emotions invalidated over and over again.

Having your emotions constantly invalidated is a key cause of anxiety. Anxiety disorder is so often the result of extreme self-doubt and self-distrust. Self-distrust, or being afraid of yourself, is another result of being led to believe that you should not feel how you feel. When you fear yourself, you have constant anxiety. It’s like living with an enemy inside your own skin.

In my estimation, the future will see an evolution in psychiatry and psychology. The many mental disorders that we think are causing symptoms will be seen as symptoms themselves. Today’s mental illnesses will be understood as adaptations caused by experiences that a person went through, usually early in life.

Long story short, if our parents didn’t teach us how to deal with our own emotions, we’re doomed to have painful friendships and unfulfilled romantic relationships because we don’t know how to emotionally relate to one another. We fail to develop true intimacy, and we tend to dismiss each other’s emotions because that’s what was modeled to us. We disapprove of each other’s feelings, telling other people how they should and shouldn’t feel. We have no patience for the emotional needs of others because we view emotions and feelings as weaknesses. We call people who display emotions “overly sensitive.” As a result of all this, our adult relationships are emotionally unhealthy.

There are many different ways that our adult relationships are shaped by childhood emotional neglect and turn out to be emotionally dysfunctional. For example, think about a woman who goes to lunch with her friend. She’s disappointed because she didn’t get promoted at work the way she thought she would, but her friend tells her she’s just being negative. Her friend says that she needs to look on the bright side because she’s just creating more disappointment by being so negative.

And what about a husband who gets home late from work to find his wife crying the minute he walks through the door? The husband sees her crying and immediately says, “You always overreact. I was only a half hour late. Maybe you are just menopausal. You need professional help.” Then he withdraws to his den to watch television.

Or consider a man who is facing divorce. He tells his friends what’s going on, and they convince him to join them for an evening out. When he shows up, none of them acknowledge that he’s going through a difficult time with his relationship. Instead they encourage him not to think about it, to have another

drink, to watch the sports game, and to look at the pretty girls at the bar.

EMOTIONS AND INTIMACY

Regardless of whether it's a friendship or a romantic relationship, emotions and feelings are the heart of every healthy and meaningful relationship. Without a healthy emotional life, a relationship is not a relationship; it is a social arrangement where no intimacy or connection exists.

It's important to understand that intimacy is not about sex. Sex may be a by-product of intimacy, but it's not intimacy in and of itself. Intimacy is about knowing yourself and being known by others for who you really are in all aspects of your life. It's the bringing forth of the truth about who you are and being received while, at the same time, the other person brings forth the truth of who they are and is received for that. Intimacy is a meeting at the heart center, where empathy and understanding occur.

I have said it before, and I'm going to say it again: intimacy can be broken down into the three-word phrase "into me see." Intimacy is to see into one another so as to deeply connect. If the core of who you are is your feelings, and the language of the soul is feelings, then the most important part of intimacy is the emotional connection you share and the understanding you have of each other's feelings.

The bottom line is: *emotions matter*. We must see the importance and value in each other's feelings. We must show respect for each other's emotions. We must listen for the feelings behind the words. We must open ourselves to being understood and open ourselves to understanding others. Furthermore, this level of understanding should always precede advice. If you tell someone how she should or shouldn't feel, you are teaching her to distrust herself. You are teaching her that there is something wrong with her.

IMPROVING YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF

Now we come to one of the most important parts of emotional health. You are in a relationship with yourself, which means your own emotions must matter to you. It's very important that you acknowledge and validate your own emotions, and not dismiss them or disapprove of them the way you might have been taught

or shown as a child.

To do this, I recommend you follow the six steps outlined below and apply them to your relationship with yourself. This will help you deal with any negative emotions or inner conflicts that may arise.

1. Become aware of your emotions. Pay attention to how they manifest within your body and what sensations accompany them.

2. Care about your emotions by seeing them as valid and important. We tend to treat our emotions as an abstract nuisance. To work with emotions, we have to recognize that there is a good reason for them. Their presence is designed to serve us, not hinder us.

3. Listen empathetically to your own emotions and try to understand why you feel the way you feel. Allow yourself to feel safe and be vulnerable without fear of self-judgment. Seek to truly understand your emotions and feelings.

4. Acknowledge and validate your own feelings. If it helps, try to label each emotion you feel. It's valid to feel the way you feel, so avoid self-critical statements, such as, "I feel so useless." Validate yourself by saying, "I can totally see how what happened could make me feel useless, and it's OK to feel that way."

5. Allow yourself to feel how you feel and experience your emotions fully before moving toward any kind of improvement. Give yourself permission to say when you are ready to improve the way you feel. Don't impose a timeline on yourself. Practice unconditional, focused presence and continue to feel unconditional love for yourself until you are ready to shift into a new emotion.

6. After (and only after) you are able to validate, acknowledge, and fully feel your emotions should you strategize ways to manage your reactions. Think of new ways you might look at a situation to improve how you are feeling. Give yourself the kindest and best advice you can, and if the time still isn't right to shift emotions, don't push it. Your own shift in emotion will come when it comes.

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS OF OTHERS

The way we deal with negative emotions in others dictates how healthy or unhealthy our relationships are. Before we progress into the Completion Process, we must learn the correct way to approach negative emotions in our relationships. You can use the same six concrete steps above in order to develop

an emotional connection with another person and enhance your intimacy. This works with children as well as adults. These steps are solid gold in a relationship when facing any kind of negative feedback or conflict.

Here are the steps to master:

1. Become aware of the other person's emotions and watch how their body language changes. We have the tendency to live in our own little bubbles. We need to become more attuned to others around us so that, when they have an emotional reaction, we can feel it empathically.

2. Care about the other person's emotions by seeing them as valid and important, the same way you would with your own emotions.

3. Listen empathetically to the other person's emotion in an attempt to understand the way they feel. This allows them to feel safe enough to be vulnerable without fear of judgment. Seek to understand instead of to agree.

4. Acknowledge and validate their feelings. This may include helping them to find words to label their emotion. To acknowledge and validate a person's feelings, we don't need to validate that the thoughts they have about their emotions are correct; we simply need to let them know that it's valid to feel the way that they feel. For example, if our friend says, "I feel useless," we don't validate them by saying, "You're right. You are useless." Instead we could validate them by saying, "I can totally see how that would make you feel useless, and I would feel the same way if I were you."

5. Allow the person to feel how they feel and to experience their emotions fully before moving toward any kind of improvement in feeling. We need to give them permission to dictate when they are ready to move toward an improvement. We shouldn't impose on them our own idea of when they should be ready or when they should be able to feel differently. This is the step where we practice unconditional, focused presence and unconditional love. We're there to support them without trying to "fix" them. Don't be offended if they don't accept your support at this time. There's a benevolent power inherent in offering. By making the offer, you are offering love in and of itself, regardless of what someone does or doesn't do with it.

6. After—and only after—their feelings have been validated, acknowledged, and fully felt, help the other person find ways to manage the reactions they have to their emotions. This is the step when you can suggest new ways of looking at a situation that may improve the way the other person is feeling. This is when advice can be offered.

WHAT'S ALL THE DRAMA ABOUT?

Drama originally meant “to act.” This is why the word debuted in the world of performance art and theatre. As it relates to your emotional life, drama is a state, situation, or series of events involving intense conflict. Put these two things together and you have the definition of a person who is dramatic, a person who acts as if they are in a state of intense conflict.

The perception is that a person who is dramatic or who is a drama queen or king is either overreacting or is acting for the sake of attention, much like a performer on stage. You know the type of person I mean, someone who acts as if things are much worse than you think they actually are. Because of this, there's a stigma associated with drama. We often hear people say, “I'm done with all the drama,” or “He's addicted to drama,” or “She's just a drama queen.”

I don't subscribe to this thinking at all, and I'd like to get this out of the way right here and now: *when it applies to the human emotional experience, there is no such thing as drama*. When you make a judgment that someone is creating drama or is just being dramatic, you minimize and shame them for their feelings. I can assure you that these feelings are actually very real.

In truth, no one overreacts. People react exactly in accordance with the reality that they alone perceive. However, you should also realize that our perception and reality are not the same. For example, let's pretend that you are married and that you tend to forget to wear your wedding ring. Let's say you left it on the counter by the sink during your shower and forgot to put it back on. Your spouse gets really upset about it and spends the next twenty minutes both crying over the matter and yelling at you about it.

You may look at your spouse and think, “This person is really dramatic.” After all, you still love your spouse, and it's just a ring. All you did was forget to put it back on. Your perspective is that your loved one is either acting out for the sake of attention or is overreacting.

But let's jump into your spouse's perspective for a minute. What if your spouse is very attached to wedding rings as a visual symbol of love? When you forget your wedding ring, your partner's reality is: “My spouse has forgotten me or doesn't love me anymore.” Then consider that this thinking is compounded with negative memories. Let's say your spouse was married once before. One day your partner came home to a house empty except for a wedding band sitting on the countertop, left by the spouse as a symbol that it was all over. That's why your spouse associates a wedding ring left on the counter with being abandoned.

Now you can see that the only reason they seem dramatic to you is because *you don't recognize* that at this moment, you are living in different realities.

You're living in a reality where you forgot to put on a piece of jewelry because you took a shower. They're living in a reality where you don't love them anymore and are going to leave them. Does the reaction seem so overly dramatic? No, you can see now that it seems perfectly called for. You'd most likely react the same exact way if you thought you were unloved and your spouse was about to leave you.

WHOSE PERSPECTIVE IS THE TRUTH?

When we think someone is being dramatic, we often tell that person to be reasonable or to take a reality check. But asking people to “be reasonable” or “look at reality” is asking them to conform *their* perspective to *your* perspective. Offering them your perspective will sometimes help them feel better, but that doesn't mean that your perspective or your grasp on reality is correct. When it comes to perspective, the truth is subjective.

If you think someone is acting as if a situation is worse than you think it is, it probably means that the situation is worse than the one you are imagining. Another way of saying this is that the meaning they have assigned to a situation is more painful than the meaning you have assigned to the situation.

So now you can see that we act perfectly in accordance with the reality we perceive; we are all acting from our own truths. Once you realize and accept this, you'll no longer feel the same level of resistance you might have felt in the past. You can stop minimizing or invalidating their feelings and stop shaming them for feeling the way they do. It won't seem as if they're overreacting, and you'll find that you won't take their behavior so personally.

People who say, “I don't want any more drama in my life,” usually mean they are sick of dramatic people in their life or they are sick of interpersonal conflict in their life. But drama isn't about the people around you; it's actually about you. I know that if I experience conflict with others, I have conflict within myself. I am at war with myself. It's the same for everyone. If you are surrounded by drama, you can't easily cut all the drama out of your life because you are, in fact, the one who is attracting it.

What happens, then, if you do manage to cut certain dramatic people out of your life? Different dramatic people will find you and fill in the places left by the others. It will keep happening until you realize why you are attracting conflict to your life. You've created a cycle of drama by attracting a suppressed aspect of yourself, an aspect you are trying to avoid.

If you are a person who hates drama, then you are probably also someone who

frequently invalidates other people's feelings by telling them that they are the ones being dramatic. That's because you have learned over the course of your life to invalidate your own feelings, and you impose this expectation on the people who surround you. Even though you wish you didn't feel the way you do, it's time to admit your feelings and stop being ashamed.

Whenever you feel resistance to drama, remind yourself that no one overreacts, including you. You always act in perfect accordance with the reality that *you* perceive. You perceive a certain reality as the result of previous experiences—experiences you may not even remember.

So you might be wondering: *How can I deal with things I can't remember?* We'll look at that in the next chapter with an in-depth discussion about how subconscious memories and triggers can sabotage your life and what you can do about them. In particular, I will introduce two concepts that I personally find very powerful: inner-child work and the human shadow.



MAKING THE SUBCONSCIOUS CONSCIOUS

It's widely known that the behavioral programming in the subconscious mind is acquired during the formative period between gestation and eight years of age. These life-shaping subconscious programs are the result of observing and interacting with our primary attachment figures in childhood, namely our parents, siblings, teachers, community, and culture. Regretfully, many of the perceptions acquired about ourselves in this formative period are expressed as limiting and self-sabotaging beliefs. But the way we *felt* during those formative experiences had an even greater effect on us.

HOW EARLY CHILDHOOD EMOTIONS TETHER US TO THE PAST

When we were young and our minds were not fully developed, we didn't *think* about the world as much as we *felt* the world. We felt the world before we saw the world. We felt the world before we could even conceptualize that we live in a world.

You came to this earth for the purpose of your own expansion. You knew that doing this would guarantee expansion for the collective as well. You adopted the consciousness level of your parents upon coming into this life, so that you could become the progression of their consciousness and, by extension, your entire line

of ancestry.

This is one of the reasons our own cognitive brain function does not fully develop until we are about eight years old. We spend our earliest years, those before the age of eight, essentially “downloading” what beliefs and experiences we can from our family and culture. During those years, the way we feel is primarily *reactive*. This means we can’t think or rationalize our way out of the painful emotions we feel. And if our traumas remain unresolved, they become wounds that last into adulthood.

REFLECTIONS OF OURSELVES

Once your cognitive mind is developed, you can rationalize your way into thinking whatever makes sense to you. If you were able to rationalize why your father left when you were four years old, you wouldn’t feel so badly about it. So, if we had the ability to think our way out of feeling, we would never have “downloaded” from our primary caregivers any issues that would need to be resolved.

But the fact that we become capable of rationalizing at about age eight has serious implications. It means that we don’t experience any new emotional traumas after about age eight. This may make no sense to you. After all, you probably suffered heartache from breaking up with a first love in your teens or 20s, or maybe you felt the immense pain of losing your husband when you were 40.

Am I really telling you that the pain you felt from age eight until now wasn’t real or that it wasn’t traumatic? No. What I am telling you is that the trauma you experienced as a result of losing your husband was in fact just a *reflection* of a prior wound. So when we consider the example of the kind of intense feelings a woman might feel from the loss of her husband today, we may find that when she was four years old, her father left the family.

Then we can see that the emotions associated with the loss of her husband are in fact a reflection of the loss of her father in childhood. The loss of her father was an unhealed wound that has re-manifested in the form of the loss of her husband; her being still hopes to integrate the old unhealed wound. This is an example that clearly shows why we need to start the Completion Process with the mantra that if anything hurts when pressed, it’s because there was already a wound there. This does not mean that you cannot suffer trauma in your adult life; it simply means that the trauma you are experiencing in your adult life often links to an even deeper causal origin.

The Completion Process will work to resolve trauma within your being no matter what age you were when that trauma occurred. For example, it will work to resolve the post-traumatic stress that a veteran is experiencing as a result of returning home from war. But what we often find while working with the trauma that we think caused our current distress is that the real trauma is in fact deeper. We discover that the trauma we think caused our distress is just a reflection of an earlier trauma. For example, the powerless feeling of being in the line of fire in a war zone could be a reflection of the powerless feeling the soldier had as a child, metaphorically being caught in the line of fire between his parents when they were divorcing. If this is a hard concept to accept, I ask you to suspend judgment for a time and simply try out this process. Let the direct experience of the Completion Process make up your mind.

As we commence with this process, I want you to think of your uncomfortable emotions today as ropes that link your current self to your traumatic memories. When you have a strong emotional reaction to something today, the strong reaction means that your past trauma has been triggered and wants to be integrated. We can then use the emotion that is surfacing in real time to find the aspect of yourself that has been rejected (and therefore suppressed), whether it's a personality trait, a belief, a memory, or a feeling. By finding it and feeling it, you integrate it back into your present awareness and, thus, become whole again. This is the underlying premise of the Completion Process.

INNER-CHILD WORK

When we become adults, we think that our childhood has ended, but it hasn't. Our child self remains alive within us. Its perceptions and beliefs affect the way we think, feel, and act today. When we encountered things in our childhood that were painful, we were stuck in that pain with no knowledge of how to assimilate or heal it. The totality of who we were at that point in time could not move forward. That's how old thoughts, feelings, and experiences froze into our being. Many of us survive and function day to day by ignoring the pain.

In some cases, the feelings became so painful that, in order to function at all, you rejected the part of yourself that first experienced that particular pain. In essence, as children we buried our own inner selves. It was a coping mechanism that served us well at the time, but stifling that pain can kill us in the end. The pain we hang on to can only be healed and assimilated when we are willing and brave enough to turn our attention back toward the child who is frozen in time. We need to listen to what that child has to say and love our inner child in the

same way he or she needed to be loved back then.

Each and every one of us, regardless of how loving or unloving our upbringing was, holds within ourselves the essence of the children we once were. One part of us grew up, but the other part stayed a child. This inner child is the symbol of our emotional selves. The adult part of you grew up, despite not getting what it needed as a child. It's your adult self who holds the key to healing.

We will always be emotional orphans if we wait for someone else to lovingly parent the underdeveloped parts of ourselves. We will always be powerless if we wait for someone else to rescue the part of us that needs to be rescued. And we will always be unhealed if we wait for someone else to take care of the parts of us that need to be cared for.

The best way to begin facilitating your own healing is to consciously take care of the child self that is present within you. You need to provide for yourself today whatever you didn't receive in the past from others. Inner-child work has been a foundation of self-help and psychology for many years. It's one of the most life-transforming techniques. But, unknowingly, we have been missing a few crucial components in this technique. The Completion Process takes inner-child work to the next level and reveals that it is much more than a quaint self-help technique.

HOW THE HUMAN SHADOW WORKS

What is the human shadow? Let me share a basic explanation. You probably already know about your ego, which is your self-concept. Your ego is the part of the internal you that forms as a kind of separate identity. When you first come into this life, your ego is not yet fully formed. But as you grow up and gradually mature, your ego is formed through your relationship to others. Therefore, the majority of your ego develops during the process of socialization.

While you are being socialized within your family and your community, you learn the concepts of good and bad, right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable. Most importantly, you learn about the aspects of yourself that are acceptable and unacceptable. It becomes clear to even young children that love and reward will come in response to what is acceptable, and that abandonment or punishment arises in response to what is unacceptable.

As we covered in an earlier chapter, people naturally develop a survival strategy, rejecting (and therefore suppressing) what we think is unacceptable about ourselves and causing a split in our consciousness. In essence, we divide ourselves. This is how the real substance of the subconscious mind is born. We could call the subconscious the “shadow” because we can’t see it clearly and, thus, are not aware of it. In the same vein, we could call our conscious side the “light” because we can see it clearly and we are aware of what is conscious in our lives. The Completion Process is a shadow work process because it’s a process that involves the aspect of ourselves that we are not conscious of.

Living with internal separation and division is not a natural state for humans. It’s actually an unhealed state because the shadow aspect of our inner selves strives to be integrated, regardless of how much we wish that it would just go away. Our shadow rears its head whenever something in our subconscious is brought into our awareness by circumstances in our life. So if our partner doesn’t show up on time, this triggers a deeply suppressed feeling of abandonment that we weren’t even aware of. It’s quite possible that we could spend the next 45 minutes flipping out in what seems like a massive overreaction. But as you learned in the last chapter, it’s not drama; it’s your true inner feelings.

To work with the human shadow is to make the unconscious “conscious” and make the unacceptable “acceptable.” The integration of your unconsciousness leads to complete and total *awareness*. It sounds great, and I believe it is a very powerful technique. But while exploration of the human shadow is popular with some spiritual teachers, psychologists, and life coaches, this technique is very unpopular with others. Even channels and spiritual guides disagree on the subject of the human shadow. So I will give you my point of view.

CAN WORKING WITH THE HUMAN SHADOW WORK AGAINST YOU?

You may have heard two specific arguments against working with the human shadow. The first is: “If you focus on your shadow, all you will get is more shadow.” The second is: “If you focus on needing to clear yourself of your shadow, all there will be is more shadow to clear.” In my opinion, these two arguments come from a limited and elementary understanding of consciousness, resistance, and the Law of Attraction.

If it were true that positive focus creates a purely positive person, then any

person who is petting a puppy or focusing positively and consistently would have a pure energy field around him that is completely clear of any “wounds.” But this is not the case.

Being born extrasensory, I have always been able to actually see energy fields around the people I meet. In truth, each human body is, at its core, an energy field. When I’m observing someone’s energy field, which is sometimes called an *aura*, and that person is focused on something positive—such as petting a puppy—parts of the person’s energy field become lighter. It’s as if they are allowing more energy in, while other parts of their energy field remain dark or cloudy.

The dark parts that appear in a human energy field are caused by aura tears, rips, or imprints from unhealed trauma, and these are especially prevalent in the emotional body field. No matter how positive someone’s focus is, if their subconscious contains trauma imprints, those aspects don’t just go away with a warm and fuzzy experience or by thinking happy thoughts.

When we experience something traumatic on an emotional level, it works the same way as it does with physical trauma. To use an extreme example, if you are the average person involved in a head-on collision and you end up with a compound fracture, no amount of purely positive focus is going to fuse your bone back together again. If you focus positively, chances are that your positive focus will simply lead you directly to a doctor who can put the bone back together again. It’s not a comfortable procedure to have a bone reset. It’s a process that demands that you admit the bone is broken, have someone set the bone and put a cast on it, and then focus deliberately on creating the healing state of that particular ailment.

Consider another scenario. What if you have a compound fracture and you attempt to distract yourself from the fracture by just thinking positive thoughts? You are then in a mental and emotional tug-of-war between the aspect of yourself that has awareness that this is a serious issue that needs conscious attention, and another aspect of yourself that doesn’t want to admit that this is a serious issue that needs conscious attention. What would cause you to decide that the best thing to do is focus positively when you clearly have a compound fracture that needs medical attention? The answer is: *to avoid something*.

What I am trying to get at here is that there is an enormous difference between focusing on something positive for the sake of maintaining a positive focus, and focusing on something positive for the sake of trying to escape from, ignore, or get away from something negative.

Consider this honestly: What is the result of trying to escape from, ignore, or get away from our compound fracture? It festers. If we survive at all, we are incapacitated. In short, when we try to avoid something unpleasant or painful,

the thing we are trying to avoid gets worse. And remember, the things we are trying to avoid are the essence of the human shadow.

We've just talked about an example from your physical body, but it's the exact same scenario that we face on an emotional level. If we suffered an emotional trauma and we reject (and therefore suppress) it in favor of keeping a positive focus, we are using positivity to get away from negativity. The emotional wound doesn't actually get any better; it festers. However, if you do focus positively, chances are that your positive focus will lead you to someone who can help you heal and ultimately integrate your emotional wounds.

I believe that if you find yourself resistant to the idea of working with the shadow, you are trying to avoid something. And when you realize that you're using positive focus to avoid something negative, it's time to release that resistance to whatever it is you're trying to avoid. To release resistance to something, you have to turn in the direction of it, instead of away from it, because turning away from it just reinforces your resistance to it.

ATTRACTING LEMONS INTO YOUR LIFE

When I say, "Don't think about lemons," you start to think about lemons. And this is what you're doing on a subconscious level by trying to use positive focus to avoid negative emotions. You're basically saying, "Whatever you do, don't focus on the way you *actually feel*." Trying not to think about the negative emotion only serves to magnify the way that you actually feel until the reflection is so big, you can't possibly escape it. It manifests itself in more and more aggressive ways, hoping that you will come to terms with it and eventually release your resistance to it.

So you are already in resistance to your shadow aspect, and this resistance is why the negative emotion settled in the subconscious in the first place. So what should you do when you are in resistance to something? You should try to release resistance to that specific thing. We know that it doesn't work to obsessively focus positively on it or to try to ignore it, because that just makes us resist it further. In our sincere effort to avoid it, we are in essence focusing on it and sending it energy without even being aware that we are doing so. The most common turn of events when we repeatedly ignore or deny what is real for us (but that is unwanted by us) is that it manifests in our body as an illness or another physical condition that we can't ignore.

It's interesting to note that we not only reject (and therefore suppress) unacceptable *bad* things into our subconscious, but we also suppress

unacceptable *good* things. This is what idolization is about. Idolization is nothing more than the projection of the suppressed positive attributes of one person onto another person, so you may admire the reflection you see instead of the source, which is yourself.

SEEKING AWARENESS

When it comes to suppressed aspects of our being, the first step in shifting from a lower vibration to a higher vibration is becoming aware. When we are dealing with something we're not consciously aware of, becoming aware is always the first step toward vibrational growth. Becoming aware is like the first time you shine light into a dark closet to see what's there. Awareness in and of itself generates immense relief. We fear our shadow, and that is why we initially resist it. But by becoming aware of it, we come to understand it. Understanding our shadow is the most effective way to diminish fear, which allows us to feel more grounded and authentic.

Positive focus does work, but there is one major exception: *positive focus works on everything except for the things you're trying to avoid*. Another way of saying this is that positive focus works every time except when it is used as a tool to enable our resistance.

Many of us are excited to discover the power of positive focus because it seems like a get-out-of-jail-free card. It seems like a magic pill that allows us to escape and avoid all of our unwanted aspects. Unfortunately, because of an incomplete understanding of the Law of Attraction, many teachers reinforce the idea that all it takes to create a perfect life is perfect positive focus.

However, consider this: if we have big things we are trying to avoid, like it or not, and conscious or not, a large part of our consciousness is going to be focused on past traumas. We're like emotional cripples who, on one level, know we are really hurt but, on another level, don't want to admit it. We'd rather believe that, if our focus is positive enough, we will miraculously be put back together again.

Here's the flaw in that thinking: The Law of Attraction, which is the governing law of our universe, is essentially the law of mirroring. The Law of Attraction states that whatever vibrations are contained within you are being matched exactly by experiences in your external world. And as we have already discussed, like it or not, your shadow aspects are vibrations within you that are attracting experiences into your life to match them. For this to stop happening, the shadows within you must be integrated and healed, in order to cease being

points of attraction.

When talking about the Law of Attraction, I often use the analogy of the radio dial. Whatever station your dial is turned to dictates what signal and, therefore, what radio station you will receive. On an emotional level, this means if you are tuned to joy, you receive joy. But this analogy only works if you see yourself in your entirety as one dial.

In reality, you are more like a switchboard made up of a multitude of dials. The various frequencies that are being received by all these different dials make up your overall vibration. You have a dial relative to every subject in your life. Looking at it this way, my dial relative to relationships could be set on despair, and so I receive relationships that lead only to heartbreak. Simultaneously my career dial could be set to elation, so I receive career opportunities that make me feel elated, and I love my job.

If you improve the frequency of the signal being received by just *one* of these dials, your overall vibration increases. But to say that positive focus in any *one* area of your life will cause positive improvement in *all* areas of your life is not accurate. Regardless of how much you positively focus on your career, on your friends, or on your body, you can still have a terrible vibration about romantic relationships, and so you will still experience negativity in your romantic life. You might start to think that positive focus doesn't work, but as I have just described, that's not the full story.

WORKING ON YOUR SHADOW HELPS YOU LET GO

Now let me explain the second most common misconception about working with the human shadow, and the reason many people are discouraged from doing it. It's based on the idea that if they focus on their shadow, that *focus* will create more of the same; thus there will always be more shadow and more work to do on their shadow. This is not accurate, and here's why:

If we acknowledge that a person is made of universal energy in a state of wholeness when she comes into this life, you could imagine that this pure energy is a light much like our sun. Throughout this person's life, as she develops and experiences traumas, she doesn't *gain darkness*. The light within her doesn't go away but rather her light is obscured. So when you work with your shadow, you will notice that it is as if you have wiped a dusty film off of a window. You don't need to work at creating more light because once the dusty film is wiped off the

window, light will stream into the room. You have removed what was obscuring the light.

Alternately, you could view your subconscious aspects as anchors that are holding you underwater. If you turned in the direction of the anchor and unhooked yourself from it, you wouldn't need to swim toward the surface. You would naturally float upward. This is what your vibration does when you do shadow work. It acts as a buoy, naturally increasing your vibration, because the things that were decreasing it re-integrated and there is no longer anything to weigh down your vibration.

When you understand this concept, you will see that it's a myth to say that if you focus on the shadow, there will always be more shadow and more work to do on your shadow. That would be like saying that if you stand at the sink and begin to wash dishes, there will always be more dishes to wash, as if a new one will pop up in your sink the second you finish cleaning the last one.

DEALING WITH A RUSH OF EMOTIONS

People who have dedicated some aspect of their personal practice to exploring their shadow know from experience that, over time, less and less work on their shadow has to be done because they become more and more integrated.

But I can see why some people are confused and might think the opposite. I believe this is because a great many of the people who are against working on the human shadow have experienced what I call an emotional healing crisis or a catharsis. When they first give themselves permission to open the closet to their subconscious, their subconscious comes rushing out.

If you're experiencing an emotional healing crisis, it's tempting to think that your life has gotten worse since you started exploring your shadow. But this is a purge. And, ironically, this is the point that most people stop working on their shadow and turn back toward where they came from. They are passing through the eye of the storm; if they would just keep going, instead of turning back, they would re-integrate those aspects and quite likely attain an enlightened experience. They would feel freedom, wholeness, and peace for the very first time. This is what I want for you, for everyone who is ready to be whole again.

So now you can see why it's important to turn around and face your fears. When you face your fears, they no longer hold power over you. You are no longer resisting "the unwanted" by running away from it. Instead you are shifting into a state of allowance and acceptance. By doing this, the old aspects of self, which were based on old traumas, can't hurt you or haunt you anymore.

Like a ghost, your shadow will follow you to the ends of the earth, begging for the light of consciousness to turn toward it. No amount of positive focus will make it disappear. Long story short: focusing on the shadow doesn't create more shadow because shadow that is exposed to the light of consciousness *ceases* to be shadow.

Now that you understand why I feel so strongly that inner-child work and exploration of the human shadow are important to this process, there are just a few more concepts to review before we proceed to the Completion Process. Specifically, I will explain how your physical body, your feeling body, and the concept of time relate to our lives and to the process of re-integration.



HOW BODY, EMOTIONS, AND TIME RELATE

In truth, there is no high or low in this Universe; but for the sake of our understanding, let's say that at the highest level of consciousness, all is integrated. All is one. At lower levels, however, there are different dimensions and facets. In this way you are like the Universe because you are also multidimensional and multifaceted.

At your highest level, all is integrated. Your physical, etheric, feeling, thinking, and spiritual bodies are all one. They are all just energy expressing itself. At lower levels, these aspects of you present as different dimensions overlaid upon one another. But these aspects are all just different expressions of the same consciousness.

THE FEELING BODY

Each feeling state has a unique sensation within the body, in the same way a morsel of food creates a unique flavor experience when you eat it. I like to refer to our unique feelings as “feeling flavors” in the body. Your feeling body, which is what most people call the emotional body, is the truth of who you are at a feeling level. This layer of you contains the imprints of the emotional aspect of your memories as well as your current emotional state. It's the bridge between your physical self and your thinking self.

Because of the emotional body, you are able to physically experience your own thoughts. First your thoughts are converted into feeling impressions. Then your physical body interprets those feeling impressions, as if translating a message, and converts those feeling states into neuropeptides and hormones. These elements cause the physical reactions in your body called “emotions.” Emotions range from fear, anger, and stress to love, compassion, and happiness.

Not surprisingly, your feeling body specializes in *feeling*. Feeling is not only about emotion. It’s also about sensation and perception. Even though emotion does not exist beyond the physical body, feeling does. Another way to say this is that an emotion is a physiological experience of a feeling, and each feeling is sensation-based perception awareness, awareness that is taking form if you will. But your feeling body is not an actual physical body. Your feeling body is etheric in nature. However, if you wish the feeling body can be visualized and therefore understood symbolically as an actual body.

SEEING BEYOND THE PHYSICAL BODY

This idea of visualizing the feeling body as an actual body is easier understood through examples, so let me share some experiences that I think will help. I have a male relative who is stoic with a confident, independent air about him. He’s very hardworking, and his attitude about life is: “You’ve got to break some eggs to make an omelet.” When his feeling body revealed itself to me, it was gray blue in color. It was hunched over at the shoulders, leaning lopsidedly to the left. The gaze of this feeling body was toward the floor. Its movements were constricted and—most shockingly of all—it was covered, especially on the left side of the face area, with disfiguring, raised scars; the scars were so bad that it looked as if they had been caused by a meat grinder.

The energy of this man was the energy of suppression and deeply imprisoned grief. Inherent in the situation is a tendency that I see quite often. When there is “damage” to our feeling body, it weakens one aspect of ourselves, causing another aspect of ourselves to overcompensate. This compensation leads to a severe lack of integration within the self, so that the self becomes fragmented and fractured.

The physical body most often compensates for the emotional body. For example, say someone’s emotional body is weak and fearful and appears to collapse in on itself; often that person will exaggerate their physical posture to appear strong, confident, and outward moving. Or that very same person might instead be particularly spiritually developed with a great talent for withdrawing

into their own consciousness and perceiving things from a more objective perspective. In each case, one aspect of self is compensating for deficiencies in another.

WHY PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY?

I feel that it's important for you to pay attention to your feeling body. For starters, the feeling body is the translator between physical experience and nonphysical experience. It's what makes you able to experience thought as something "real." In fact, without your feelings, nothing about your physical reality would seem real because your sense of life itself and the feeling-based conclusions you make about your life are all part of your feeling body.

Your interpretations are a part of your feeling body, and we already talked about the fact that your emotional trauma is a part of your feeling body. If your sense of life is painful, and if the conclusions you've drawn about life are painful, and if memories are painful, then your feeling body will continue to convey all these painful messages to your physical body. This will be interpreted as an unpleasant emotion within your body and quite likely will lead you to have an unhappy life.

So, for example, if you have a negative interpretation of your life, this will lead to a physical reflection of those painful emotional states. The worst part is, you can't stop reliving that original trauma. You can't be in the present moment because the emotional trauma comes up over and over again in an attempt to integrate itself. In other words, if I felt like my father abandoned me in some way when I was young, over the course of my life I will manifest situations that make me feel abandoned.

It makes sense that if healing must take place on the emotional and feeling level, you do have to address the emotions and feelings themselves. You must address the first time you felt those emotions and feelings. But here's the catch: The minute you say, "I need to heal something," this implies that you have to change or fix something, which means that you disapprove of something. The best way to damage yourself emotionally is to look at yourself through the lens of "something needs to *change*." If you approach your feeling body with an attitude of "I need to fix you," you have just taken a serrated knife to a wound. You have not healed anything. So what is the alternative?

The best alternative to trying to *fix* or *heal* the emotions is to embrace the feelings and emotions entirely, no matter how painful. Be with the feelings and emotions instead of trying to change them. Listen to them and what they need

you to know. We can call this process *integration* instead of healing. As you go through this part of the Completion Process, you will learn how to be fully and completely present with yourself and your emotions. I believe that one of the best ways to do this is a variation of Vipassana meditation, which is one of the oldest meditation practices on the planet. It's the form of meditation that the Buddha used to attain enlightenment.

Vipassana means to see things as they really are, and the goal of Vipassana meditation is to transform oneself through self-observation. You will experience this as you work through the Completion Process, becoming fully present with yourself, but more than being fully present without thoughts, you will be fully present *with your emotions*. For this reason, I've lovingly nicknamed this part of the process Emotional Vipassana.

FEELING AND BEING

Much of the focus in the world of healing seems to center around one thing: feeling better. There is nothing wrong with this goal; it's natural, but it is a trap that actually *prevents* the completion of our healing. By thinking that you have to feel better, you unconsciously send yourself the message that there's something wrong with feeling the way you feel. You've given yourself the message that you need to be *fixed*, which we now realize is a covert level of self-rejection. You reject the place you are if you think where you are needs to be changed. You reject the way you feel if you think the way you feel needs to be changed.

This is exactly the problem that caused you to end up in this position in the first place. People around you couldn't simply be unconditionally present and loving of you exactly as you were, so now you must do it for yourself.

When you were young and feeling sad, you didn't want your parents to rescue you from the pain or try to make you feel better, as much as you wanted them to be completely and unconditionally with you while you felt how you felt. Because they didn't do this, you got the message that their presence was conditional. It was conditional upon you being sweet, cheerful, or silent. You have continued to give yourself that same message, that you only deserve your presence if you feel a certain way. Here is that fair-weather relationship again.

So what's the alternative? What I'm proposing is to switch your focus from feeling better to *being willing to feel*. Give yourself, your thoughts, and your emotions the unconditional, focused presence and loving care that you've been craving and not getting from other people for so long. If we want a world where we can do this for each other, we need to learn how to do it ourselves and then

pass it on to other people through our own willingness to be unconditionally present with them.

IS IT DESIRE OR IS IT A CRAVING?

Thousands of years ago, it was said that desire was the root of suffering. Is this true? No, it's not. The actual word that was used in this phrase was *Tanhā*. What is the translation of *Tanhā*? Thirst. What is the difference between desire and thirst? A whole lot! Think of choice as a two-sided coin. On one side is desire, and on the other is thirst. Thirst is the shadow side of desire on this coin called "choice."

Thirst implies that there is a lack and that the lack is what is motivating the craving. Thirst is an attachment, a craving of something, but it's also motivated by an aversion to something else. The root of suffering, therefore, is the state of perpetual movement from aversion toward attachment, the thing we crave because of our acute awareness of the lack of it. Attachment is nothing more than an addiction, that is to say the desperate wanting of something because of something else you are lacking or trying to avoid.

So there is a difference between a craving and a desire. Craving is the shadow aspect of desire. The shadow of desire stems from a perceived deprivation. Desire is not bad. In fact, you cannot escape desire in this lifetime, nor would you want to if you really understood it. You can, however, transmute it. You can exalt it.

Desire in its pure form, absent of shadow, is like a "yes" to an experience. It's the "yes" that occurs from sorting through contrast. But it's a "yes" that is not the by-product of a "no." In other words, it's a "yes" to an experience or the choice of an experience that is not motivated by aversion; thus, it doesn't take on the form of attachment. In this way, desire in its pure form is absent of resistance, making it a tool of the true self. Desire facilitates expansion, self-awareness, and self-realization, whereas craving is a tool of the ego.

Here's perhaps the most surprising part: *ego* is a term that the Buddha did not even know. It is a Freudian term, which was adopted into modern Buddhist circles and applied to the teachings of Buddha. It was simply the best word we could come up with to describe the difference between the enlightened perspective of no separate self and the illusionary perception of the separate self. Later the famed psychiatrist and psychotherapist Carl Jung called this the "shadow aspect," meaning conscious versus not conscious.

But when the Buddha accurately described his enlightenment experience,

what he was trying to explain was that he had observed a polarity inherent within himself, a polarity like truth and illusion, conscious and unconscious, suffering and happiness. And that enlightenment transcended all polarity. Enlightenment is not happiness any more than it is suffering. Enlightenment is liberation from polarity.

THE ROUTE TO FEELING BETTER

All of our behaviors then, regardless of whether they are seemingly malicious or seemingly benign, have a single root: *we want to feel better*. The person who shoots up heroine does so because she wants to feel better. The person who gets married does so because he thinks it will make him feel happier. The person who murders another commits that murder because he thinks it will make him feel better.

Up to now, all movement within this Universe is done to move toward something because you want to move away from something else. We move toward what is wanted because of our desire to move away from something that is unwanted.

The biggest issue is that when you live your life moving away from a negative toward a positive, you are always in motion. You can never stop to smell the roses in the present moment, so to speak. All decisions are made from pain. All desires are the by-product of trying to move away from pain. But I'm asking you to imagine a life where there is nothing you wish to move away from, a state where your life is lived for joy in total nonresistance to pain. In order to end this trail of tears and reach this better point, you must end the perpetual movement away and toward, away and toward.

To end the movement from aversion toward craving, which is all attachment really is, we turn in the direction of our aversion. We sit with it completely. We embrace it. We are unconditionally present with it, and we let it know that we are willing to experience it without needing it to change. We are set free because of our willingness to bring the light of the presence of our consciousness into the shadow of the absence of our consciousness.

Once we no longer have an aversion to our aversion, it's no longer our master. Desire is transmuted because it's finally free of its shadow. Taking this one step further, there is no longer any need for reincarnation either. The craving for reincarnation is gone from our very soul. The soul now makes all its choices free from any motivation caused by aversion or craving, which is a truly liberating place to be.

THE TRUE NATURE OF PEACE

Peace is much more than the absence of war. Peace is the absence of internal conflict and external conflict. It's the absence of opposition and polarity. Peace is the center point in the symbol of infinity. Peace really has no opposite, but rather peace can be described as a unified being-ness, a state of enlightenment. Peace can be seen as the by-product of the ongoing process of becoming conscious.

As the Universe, also called source, becomes more conscious of itself, there is more to become conscious of; we, as a microcosm of the larger Universe, must also become more conscious. Because of this, there is always further enlightenment to experience.

Looking at the infinity symbol, usually represented as a sideways figure eight, we can see that there is polarity. On one side physical, on the other side nonphysical; on one side life, on the other side death; on one side light, on the other dark; and so on. But in between them is a point, the still point, where the lines intersect. This is the part of the infinity symbol that truly represents infinity. It's not the balance between opposites; it is actually the union of and the transcendence of those opposites.

Within the Completion Process, we find a practical approach to the enlightenment we seek. The shadow, once integrated, no longer drives us away from anything or toward anything else. We are free, free to consciously choose. It's the state of self-actualization, of being awakened.

ENTERING THE CO-EXISTENT TIME LINE

Time feels as if it flows in a linear manner from past to present to future. It feels as if the present is constantly updating itself. We have a perception that the future is open until it becomes present and that the past is fixed. But all of this is just perception. In reality, all time lines exist simultaneously. The Universe is more like an ocean composed of all things that have ever, are ever, and will ever exist. Everything that has been, is, or will be co-exists. Because of the Law of Attraction, some of the "nows" are a vibrational match to other "nows." They relate to one another, and the perception you have of them is that they line up. We call this lineup "time."

The best way to allow your linear mind to comprehend a Universe composed of only "now's" is to imagine that you see me walking into a library. Then imagine that I tore out every page from every book in the library and littered the floor with them. There is no longer any order to the pages; all stories and all time

lines in those stories now co-exist as an ocean of information. If I were to put on a pair of goggles that allowed me to see a specific color for the page that belonged to a specific book, I could see them as a match to one another. If I collected them, I could then arrange them in a special order to make the story unfold so that the information had meaning. I would be making a linear story out of an ocean of information. In essence, this is what the mind does.

So now you can better understand how memory works. Memory is actually just the result of the mind arranging “now’s” into a sequence so that meaning can be derived from them and so that progression or expansion can be perceived. To take this even further, it must be said that even the perception of “now” is an illusion. It takes “time” for light to move from the book in front of you to your eye, and so as soon as you perceive these words in front of you, you do, in fact, not perceive them in real time. You perceive something that was the “now” milliseconds in the past.

Therefore we can never actually see anything as it is *now*. What does all this mean for us with regard to the Completion Process? It means that we must begin to view time in its entirety as a beneficial illusion, but an illusion nonetheless. Upon coming into a physical life, we come into the perception of linear time for the purpose of learning. We think the past is gone, but the past is not gone. This means time travel is a reality for the mind, regardless of whether it’s as yet a reality for the body. In fact, the only thing you’d theoretically need a time machine for is physical time travel. The mind and emotions don’t need a time machine to travel across time.

VIEWING OUR LIVES ON A LINEAR TIME LINE

For the sake of understanding the Completion Process, and for simplicity, we are going to work with our generally accepted perception of time. On a linear time line, we perceive causation. What that means is that you can see how something in the now or in the future was set in motion as a result of something in the past.

For example, you can see how losing your parent at a young age is the cause of your reluctance to love someone as an adult, which is the effect. Because we think the past is gone, we don’t think we have any ability to alter the cause, only the effect. So most of our healing modalities seek to alter the effect without ever addressing the cause. But if you alter the effect without dealing with the cause,

no real transformation occurs. It is a bit like trying to kill a weed without pulling up the root. By pulling the root, we change all that was a progressive result of the root.

If we see that time is an illusion and that our reality is composed only of what we perceive, the lines between imagination and reality blur. Let them blur, and the mind will be open to possibilities that were previously unperceivable. We can be open to the possibility that by mentally making changes to the past, it causes mental changes to our present, and by emotionally making changes to the past, it causes emotional changes to our present.

This allows us to see that the world is open for infinite possibilities with regard to healing. For example, a person who was moved around a lot as a child may have developed the feeling that she couldn't control anything. She felt powerless and stressed. That is causation. As an adult, she may turn to smoking because it causes her to feel relief, but it also provides a ritual that makes her feel like she has control and power over her life. Smoking is the effect.

Consider what would happen if we took this person mentally and emotionally back in time and healed the childhood causation. That person might wake up the next morning with no desire to smoke a cigarette. This example is not fictitious. It's, in fact, an actual account of what occurred with one of my clients. In our present lives, we are but a walking imprint of the past. By altering the past, we affect the present, and the good news is, we don't need a time machine to do it.

The past is not lost to us. We can use the painful emotions that arise in the present to access our past. So often, we have wished we could alter the course of history without knowing that we can. We can put ourselves back together again and make ourselves complete again.



COMPLETION



PREPARING YOURSELF FOR THE COMPLETION PROCESS

Now that you have attuned yourself to the Completion Process by reading Chapters 1–4, it's time to make it a part of your life. You cannot do the process incorrectly. There's no such thing as a correct or an incorrect experience while doing the Completion Process. From this point forward, you should progress with the following statement in mind: "Every experience I have while doing the Completion Process is valid, and every experience I have while doing the Completion Process is the right one for me. It's the exact experience that I need at this time."

GETTING STARTED

When you commit to the Completion Process, you adopt the perspective that any current emotional upset is, in fact, just the echo of a traumatic memory. You might be haunted by it or not even remember it, but the circumstance in your current life that you think is the cause of your upset is just a trigger from a prior wound, a wound that needs your attention. Because triggers today help you see the wounds you have tried to suppress, the triggers are beneficial instead of detrimental.

You might find it difficult to accept that triggers today are a good thing, even

when they hurt so badly. You don't have to feel grateful for them; you just have to commit to viewing them as messengers carrying the echo of something important. Looking at triggers this way, you can use them to your advantage. You can see each trigger as a wide-open opportunity for integration.

The beauty of the Completion Process is that when you use triggers to integrate yourself, you'll eventually lose any negative association that you might have had with the triggers. You'll be much less reactive when a trigger does occur, and you'll begin to associate triggers with integration and feeling better instead of feeling worse.

Once the meaning of something changes this dramatically, your whole life can be lived differently. You no longer live in a state of defense or feeling victimized. You'll feel like the Universe is assisting you instead of deliberately causing you to suffer.

WHEN TO USE THE COMPLETION PROCESS

When you are committed to the Completion Process, you practice the art of taking your attention off the thing that has triggered you and away from the story you might be telling yourself about the present circumstance. Instead, you'll place your attention on the feeling you are experiencing as a result of what just happened. I call this listening to the echo.

Once you feel that an emotion has been triggered, it's an ideal time to use the Completion Process. There are times when it's not possible to do the Completion Process right then and there. If this is the case, then wait for a better time or schedule a better time. Only you know how dedicated you are to yourself and to this process of integration. But in general, the sooner you can use a trigger to integrate, the better.

How soon you do the integration comes down to a matter of priority. You have to ask yourself what is really important. Is that other activity so important that it should take priority over doing the Completion Process, which helps you heal and become whole again? So, for example, what if you feel a trigger from someone or something just before you are planning to clean the kitchen? If you decide it's more important to clean, you're telling yourself that the kitchen floor and the dishes in the sink are more important than your health and wellness.

Once you are in a safe and quiet place and can go through the steps, start by thinking about the event that triggered you and see if you can re-activate the painful feeling.

Most people who commit to the Completion Process are perfectly capable of

managing whatever comes up as a result, and find it instantly causes them to feel better. However, as with any deep healing process, it is a good idea to make sure that you have professional support or a friend you can call on in case you run into anything too difficult to handle on your own.

If at any point during the process you feel tempted to harm yourself or someone else, seek help immediately. This is an especially important caution for those who have experienced ritual trauma or who were mentally programmed. They should definitely engage a skilled professional to work with them directly from the outset.

THE ROLE OF A PRACTITIONER OR TRUSTED FRIEND

For the majority of people, the ultimate goal of the Completion Process is to develop the ability to use this tool on their own. By doing it yourself, you hold the power for your healing process. I believe any risk is minimal when someone does this for himself. In fact, I strongly believe that the consequences of living in a constant reactive state are far worse. Why let the echoes of the past haunt you forever? If you have read the whole process and you feel called to try it, then you should do so.

That being said, if after you read through all the steps and it still sounds intimidating to you, you can ask someone you trust to help you, especially when you are just beginning. You know yourself best. You could ask a friend to help or engage a Completion Process Certified Practitioner (CPCP). I have explained more about this role in [Appendix B](#).

The Completion Process is a wonderful tool in and of itself because it can stand alone as its own form of therapy. But it also works very well as a modality that could be added to other therapies, such as energy work, bodywork, psychology, and psychiatry.

I believe that if a particular emotional state is echoing as a trigger, it's because the emotional state and the memory attached to it are begging to be integrated. Your inner self will try to integrate something only once it feels you are in a safe enough state to heal. This is why post-traumatic stress symptoms don't show up until the person is out of fight-or-flight mode and in a space where it no longer serves the consciousness to remain fractured.

By taking on this work yourself or with a caring friend or practitioner, you aren't forcing anything. Your very being is trying to heal, and it will continue to

try to do so with or without your conscious assistance. If you are being triggered and are aware of the trigger, you are now ready and capable of handling whatever comes up during the process of integration.

THE COMPLETION PROCESS AS A DAILY PRACTICE

When you become dedicated to the Completion Process, you can make it more than something you do only in response to triggers. You can make it part of your daily meditative practice. Some people find that the best time to do this is when you first wake up. Before you do anything else, sit up in bed or walk to a chair or meditation cushion and commence the process.

Begin by being present with whatever feeling is within your body. You might find that the feeling is a holdover from the night before or an emotional response to a dream that you had while sleeping. Your subconscious mind tries to integrate and heal itself during the night, in dream time, so it's pretty common to process things emotionally and mentally during the night.

Once you have become familiar with the “feeling flavor” that is being experienced in your body upon waking that day, start to do the rest of the Completion Process. You can use this morning ritual in addition to using the process anytime you are triggered throughout the day.

Truly the Completion Process doesn't *cause* us to become complete and it doesn't *cause* us to become whole, but rather it awakens us to the fact that we always were and always are complete and whole. Regretfully there are many things, many past wounds, which obscure us from this truth about ourselves. But as the wounds obscuring this truth are embraced by our own minds and hearts, our true selves that contain this undeniable truth can and will be uncovered.

THE FLOW OF THE COMPLETION PROCESS

Remember that once you start the process, you should go straight through from Step 1 to Step 18. In other words, the Completion Process is not an exercise where you can do a few steps today and then finish the rest next week. Each step builds on the previous one, and the entire process is designed to be completed in one sitting so that the emotional process is opened and closed properly and predictably. It can be intensely emotional, so paying attention and

finishing what you start is very important.

You will notice as you keep reading that some steps are relatively quick and straightforward, while others are more involved and may take longer to accomplish. There is no usual time frame that this takes; just allow the flow of healing from Step 1 to Step 18, taking as much time as feels right for you. The number of minutes will be different for each person, and that is perfectly normal.

This next section provides a short description of each step so you can get a quick overview of the whole process. Chapters 6–9 provide more detailed descriptions of each of the 18 steps. It is advised that you read through these next four chapters before beginning; this way, you will be very familiar with what to watch for and what needs to be done in each step. Once you are comfortable with the individual steps and the overall flow, you may need to refer only to the Quick Reference Page in [Appendix A](#), which gives a simplified list and brief descriptions of each step.

Please note that all details and descriptions of the 18 steps (both the short references below and the longer, detailed descriptions in the coming chapters) are specifically written so that you, a helpful friend, or a Completion Process Certified Practitioner (CPCP) can follow along. The process is the same.

THE COMPLETION PROCESS—SHORT DESCRIPTIONS OF EACH STEP

1. **Create a Safe Haven.** We set up a Safe Haven (safe place) in our mind, and we also create a primary “Safe Support Figure.” This has to be done only once, unless you wish to create a different kind of place at another time.
2. **Emotional Vipassana.** We practice Emotional Vipassana in order to explore the feeling or trigger. When we have a strong uncomfortable emotion or feeling in the present, we close our eyes and sink into the feeling. We familiarize ourselves with the unique sensations or “feeling flavor” of the feeling. We are unconditionally with that feeling, experiencing and observing it without needing it to change. After a time, we see if we can name the feeling. We can do this with ourselves regardless of whether there is a particular feeling present; it is simply much easier and more impactful when a strong emotion is present.

3. **Validate the Present Feeling.** We give the emotion or feeling the message that we are completely with it, that we see it as valid, that we care about it, and that we are ready and want to know what it has to say. We are open to fully receiving it.
4. **Invite the Memory to Surface.** We use the sensations of the “feeling flavor” like a rope connecting us to the origin or causation of that very feeling. We ask, “When was the first time I felt this feeling?” And instead of mentally chasing the answer, we let our being offer it up to us like a bubble floating up from the depths of the ocean in whatever form it comes.
5. **Re-experience the Memory.** If/when a memory surfaces, we observe and experience the memory in whatever way it comes to us. We take time to be present with the intensity of the feeling of the memory. We emotionally re-experience it.
6. **Validate the Feeling within the Memory.** We give the emotion in the past (same as we did when it was present tense) the message that we are completely with it, that we see it as valid, that we care about it, and that we are ready and want to know what it has to say. We are open to fully receiving it.
7. **Step into Adult Perspective within the Memory.** When we feel ready, we step out of the perspective we are currently in (such as first person) within the memory and step into the perspective of our current adult self within the memory. In other words, we move from passively witnessing the memory to active visualization.
8. **Validate the Child’s Emotions.** We comfort and show affection and unconditional, focused presence to our child self in the scene with one prerogative in mind, *validation* of the child’s emotions. We give the child the message that it is right and OK to feel how they feel, and we give the child permission to fully feel how they feel. If we feel unequipped to do this, we bring our Safe Support Figure from the Safe Haven into the scene to do this for our child self.
9. **Await Relief.** We wait for the child self in the scene to naturally move in the direction of relief (keeping in mind the child selves may just need you to prove that you will be there for them forever, just as they are).
10. **Call Back Other Fractured Aspects of Self.** We “call back” any

other fractured aspects of the self that are present in that one scene and lovingly merge them into the core child self, so we are only dealing with one child self.

11. **Meet the Child's Needs within the Memory.** When and if the child feels validated and is ready to move forward emotionally, we take action to find a resolution to the situation at hand. This is where creativity and individuality are important. We must find out what need is not being met and meet it. We can say things to our child selves that make them feel good. We can stand up for our childhood selves. Give suggestions and take suggestions but, ultimately, trust yourself (or the person doing the process) to know what is needed to alter the circumstance. Above all, trust the child self in the scene to know what he or she wants and needs.
12. **Choice to Stay or Go.** When a feeling of relief has occurred as a result of taking action to change the circumstance in the memory, we give the child the *choice* to stay in the memory/visualization or to come to the Safe Haven.
13. **Check for Completion.** If the child chooses to stay, we ask the child why he or she wishes to stay, we respond accordingly, and we repeat Steps 10–12 if necessary before bringing the process to a close. As we repeat the steps, we check again for any more nonintegrated, fractured aspects of the child self that might still be stuck in the memory. If we find any, we merge them into one child self and ask again. We trust the child to know what is right for him or her, and we meet all of the child's needs within the context of the memory. If the child wants or needs someone to stay, we leave an aspect of ourselves or our Safe Support Figure there with our child self. If the child chooses to go to the Safe Haven, the child is brought to the Safe Haven.
14. **Enter Safe Haven and Deactivate the Memory.** Coming into the Safe Haven, the memory the child was taken out of is then closed (for example, shrunk or popped like a balloon).
15. **Create Purification and Healing.** Place the child (or children) in the healing water, and bathe him or her as a purifying and healing ritual for entering into the Safe Haven. The child drinks the water as well. This symbolically ends the previous life in the memory so that the child can begin a new life here in the Safe Haven.

16. **Meet the Child's Needs within the Safe Haven.** The child's needs and wants are met within the context of the Safe Haven to the degree that the person doing the process feels as if the session is complete.
17. **Option to Stay or Merge.** The child is given the choice to stay in the Safe Haven or to rejoin and merge with the adult perspective. If the child chooses to stay, lovingly embrace and support that choice. If the child chooses to merge, we imagine the child merging with our adult perspective and becoming a part of us, like a puzzle piece going back into place.
18. **Return to Conscious Perspective.** We return to conscious perspective, taking at least a few deep breaths as we bring our consciousness back to real time. And we gently take time to re-acclimate to the sharpness of our surroundings and the new level of integration and presence that we feel. We need to be present with the way we feel when we come out of the process. Our body needs to process the integration that just occurred.



STEPS 1– 6 : SAFE HAVEN AND ACCESSING THE MEMORY

When the trauma we experienced is buried deep within us, we are often not even aware that it is there. However, we experience the reflection of that buried trauma as emotional reactions in our day-to-day life. These reactions are painful, and so we behave just like we did when we experienced the original trauma: we do anything we can to get away from the way we feel in an attempt to feel better instead. But this sets us up to spend our lives trying to escape from ourselves and trying to avoid facing the way we really feel.

When we commence healing with the Completion Process, we move forward, guided by the tenet that the only way *out* is *in*. We first lay the scaffolding upon which the rest of the process is built; we begin the practice of using our feeling reactions to help us find and willingly re-experience the memories that are causally linked to them. We learn how to be completely and unconditionally present with ourselves.

The following six steps of the process are presented in full detail so you can understand the importance of each one and how to proceed through them. As mentioned, please read through all the steps in Chapters 6–8 before starting to actually do the Completion Process. This way you will know what to watch for when you are ready to proceed.

STEP I: CREATE A SAFE HAVEN.

This first step sets up a Safe Haven in your mind and also creates a primary “Safe Support Figure.” This step is critical because so many of us on this earth don’t feel safe. This is especially true when we are dealing with traumatic memories of any kind.

When we start the Completion Process by setting up a Safe Haven within our minds, we then have a place that is within our control and that we can visit at any time. We only have to do this one time, unless we wish to add more elements to the safe place or create an entirely new one. If we have already set up a mental Safe Haven, we can commence the Completion Process each time we do it by starting instead with Step 2.

Our Safe Haven acts as a foundation for the Completion Process, giving us a stable “base camp” from which to do our retrieval work. It’s crucial that we provide this kind of secure place so that the missing aspects of ourselves that we are retrieving from our memories will be able to return safely.

By creating this Safe Haven in our minds, we’re able to bend the physical rules that govern and restrict us in our physical life. For example, a cut on our arm might usually take two weeks to heal in physical life, but in our Safe Haven, we can put a special salve on it, and it can heal before our eyes. This kind of magical thinking is a critical ingredient when we are healing from states of *powerlessness*. You will find that a child who experiences trauma almost always feels some degree of powerlessness. Therefore, when our child self is able to experience a thought-scape where anything is possible, that thought-scape experience is healing to the child in and of itself.

As for creating the Safe Haven, keep in mind that this will be an intensely individual place; therefore, there’s no right or wrong way to create it. We need to allow our minds to reveal to us what would feel best. For very specific reasons, I have designed the mental process of setting up the Safe Haven in the way I describe below, but don’t be afraid to bend or change the process according to your needs or the needs of the person you are helping or facilitating.

For example, when I walk people through the Completion Process, I ask the person to imagine walking through a tunnel to get to their Safe Haven. This creates a necessary and believable mental separation between the physical memories and the Safe Haven. But if a client has been through a war or had negative experiences with tunnels or caves, then using the image of going through a tunnel would present a negative association and negate the feeling of safety we wish to create. So if you know that you or the person you’re helping has sensitivities to certain common images, then design an entrance and Safe

Haven in a way that feels fully secure.

Another construct I like to use in the Safe Haven is to ask the person to create a water feature where they will later experience the healing and purification of water. But if water makes someone feel unsafe, then of course I would change the suggestion to some other element or substance.

If possible, it's best to construct your Safe Haven by having someone else walk you through it so that your concentration is not broken by having to refer back to the written text. Your friend or practitioner might read you the guided meditation below, or you could record yourself reading the words slowly and gently, and then play it back. Here is a sample of the words that I often use when helping someone to create a Safe Haven in their mind. Listen to the words as a guide to help you set up your Safe Haven.

Creating Your Safe Haven—Guided Meditation

As you take this first step in the Completion Process, begin by making yourself as comfortable as possible, either sitting in a chair or lying flat on the bed or on the floor. Gently close your eyes. Allow the weight of your body to settle down toward the earth. Take a few deep breaths, and let go a little bit more on each exhale. Now allow your breath to settle and find its own natural rhythm. If you notice the body or the mind tensing around your experience, gently let go again without judgment.

And now imagine that you are walking along a path. You are inexplicably drawn along this path. It is leading you to your own sanctuary where you can always come to experience peace and safety. Look down at your feet. What kind of path are you walking on? What is it made of? Is it made of stone or wood? Is it a pathway that leads to another galaxy or dimension? Perhaps it has been specially made out of some other material that is not yet known to this world. Is it strewn with something, such as flower petals or shells? Is the path narrow or wide? See and feel this path in your mind.

As you continue to walk along the path, breathe freely and easily. Sense your anxieties and stresses and pressures fade away. They are unable to follow you here. Up ahead, you notice a secret entryway that only you can see. This entryway is the door leading to your very own Safe Haven. How is this entryway concealed? Perhaps it is a wooden door, covered in ivy. Perhaps it is a portal that opens and closes when you say a magic word. Maybe it's a cave entrance that appears in the snow. Imagine or sense this unique secret entryway, revealing itself only to you as you approach it. Then walk through the entryway.

As your eyes adjust to the light, you realize that you are now walking or being

pulled through a secret tunnel or portal. What does this tunnel look like? Is it a wormhole in space? Is it a cave in the ocean? Is it a tunnel made of dirt and stones? What do the tunnel walls look like? Are they covered with beautiful, exotic flowers? Is the tunnel made of metal or some other man-made material? Is the tunnel made of swirling energy? Just experience this secret, sacred tunnel that leads you to your very own safe and sacred place.

You continue to walk through the tunnel, and suddenly you see your perfect sanctuary for the very first time. You step into it, and you can hear or feel or see the tunnel close behind you so that no one may follow. In a space that is created by the mind, there are no limits whatsoever. This place can be as real or as imagined as your soul wants it to be. This place could be like a place that is found on Earth or like a place from a science fiction or fantasy novel.

As your Safe Haven is revealed to you, you may see that you are outside in the mountains or on a beach. Or perhaps you're inside a soap bubble, a flower, or a geode floating through space, looking back at the Earth. You may be in a forest or in a coral reef under the ocean waves or in the billowy clouds. Your Safe Haven might even be in another dimension, on another galaxy or planet. This is the place that makes you feel the most at ease, the safest and the freest.

Now look around you. What can you see? Are there birds or trees here? Are there fish or other animals? If you are outside, what is the weather like here? Spend some time noticing all the things that you can see in your Safe Haven.

What can you hear in your Safe Haven? The wind rustling the leaves in the trees? A beautiful song? The sound of waves crashing? Or maybe the sound of absolute silence? Spend a moment noticing the sounds that fill your Safe Haven.

What can you smell here? Can you smell ocean foam? Or the dampness of soil? Can you smell the scent of bread or cookies baking in the oven? Can you smell the scent of summer rain? Or is it an out-of-this-world smell that you have never smelled before? Spend a moment noticing the smells that linger in the air in your Safe Haven.

Now you are going to create a house or dwelling in this Safe Haven. Since you are the designer and builder of your Safe Haven, you get to decide exactly how you want it to be. You may design a palace or tree house or monastery or even a simple, rustic cabin. Inside this place are beds, where your child self can choose to lie down and rest or sleep. The beds can be ordinary beds, or they can be nests or forts. Design whatever beds feel the most inviting to you. You can make this house and the beds in it out of anything you wish, real or imagined.

If you have built rooms, are there windows in the rooms? What can you see out of them? If you wish, you can decorate your Safe Haven, both inside and out. Perhaps you would like to leave it simple and natural. Perhaps you would like to

adorn your Safe Haven with rays of light or flowers or special rocks or crystals or shells. Perhaps there are hand-woven rugs, should you wish to lie down. What materials have you chosen? Who made them? Choose the decorations you love.

Now somewhere in this Safe Haven, see a water feature. This might be an ocean or a fountain, a stream or a lake. It may be a bathtub, hot tub, or shower. And imagine that this water is special water. It's magic water. Anything that touches it is instantly healed. See the water shimmering and sparkling in the light. What color is the water? Is it clear or opaque or iridescent? Maybe it's turquoise or purple or gold. This is going to be where you bathe and heal your child self as she comes to the Safe Haven.

Now imagine that in your Safe Haven, there is a kind and loving being or person who is strong enough to assist you and tend to this Safe Haven. Your Safe Haven is where this being or person lives. This Safe Support Figure is a being or person who is so transcendent that he or she is able to calmly and lovingly assist with anything he or she may come across. This is your own personal helper. Who is this being or person? Is it a character from a novel you read once? Is it an imagined person? Is it a person you admire, such as Jesus or the Buddha? Is it someone you know and trust, such as a grandmother who has passed? Is it an angel or a benevolent extraterrestrial being? Or maybe a favorite superhero? What is his or her name? Spend some time acquainting yourself with this special being. Know that this being that lives in your Safe Haven will be there for you anytime you want or need.

Breathing freely and easily, look about your peaceful Safe Haven and see if there is anything else that you wish to add. For example, maybe you would like to add animals (real ones or fantasy animals). Just take a moment to decide what would make this Safe Haven feel even more perfect to you and add it to the scene.

Now imagine that in this peaceful space, there is somewhere for you to sit or lie down, a place that you can come to sink deeply into relaxation and security. Is it a chair, bed, or hammock? Is it a smooth rock or a throne or the edge of a cliff? What does it look like? What color is it? What material is it made of?

Take a seat now in whatever resting place you have designed. No matter where you find yourself resting, feel the tension and stress drain away with the peaceful safety of this sacred place. This is the place you can come to sit and feel at peace anytime you should wish. It's also the place you can sit and hold your childhood self if you should retrieve this child and he simply wants to be held by you or fall asleep in your lap.

Spend some time here, observing and listening to and smelling and feeling this perfect place. Let your mind make this imagined place as magical and

unbelievably perfect as possible.

Whenever you feel ready to rejoin your day-to-day life, imagine yourself slowly standing up and leaving your Safe Haven. You leave through a doorway that opens only for you, in response to your presence, a signal, a code, or a special phrase you recite. Whenever you come here, use your signal or code to gain entry. Take a moment to memorize the special way that you and only you can gain access to your Safe Haven.

Take a look back at this Safe Haven, knowing that you can come here anytime you wish. Know that you always feel completely content here and completely safe and stress free. Know that you can change or add to your peaceful sanctuary at any time.

[At this point, you may proceed to the next part of the Completion Process, Step 2. Or if you would rather just return immediately to full consciousness, then proceed through the next two paragraphs of the visualization.]

Once your visit to your Safe Haven is complete, turn back around and walk through the secret doorway, back through the tunnel that opens up once more, and follow the pathway that brought you to this place.

Taking a few deep breaths, decide for yourself if you are ready to return. If you are, bring your attention back to the full awareness of your body lying on the bed or sitting on the chair. Feel yourself being in firm contact with the earth. Tune into the movements of the breath in your body, and gradually externalize your awareness, listening to the sounds in the room and feeling the air against your skin. When you're ready, gently open your eyes and re-acclimate to your real-life surroundings.

Returning to the Completion Process

As we progress through the Completion Process, we will find ourselves changing or adding things to our Safe Haven. This is normal. As your childhood self comes to the Safe Haven and enters with her own desires and preferences, we will see a great many additions to this place.

For example, one part of your childhood self might want a sandbox, so a sandbox will become a part of the Safe Haven. Another part of your child self may want a unicorn to keep her company, so a unicorn may be added to the Safe Haven. You may decide that you want to change the house for children to live in, or build a second one in a completely different style just to suit your childhood selves whenever you come to stay. You may even wish to add beloved relatives to your Safe Haven.

There is no limit to what you can do to enhance your own Safe Haven so it

becomes your own sacred mental paradise. Trust it to evolve over time in exact accordance with what is best for you.

STEP 2: EMOTIONAL VIPASSANA.

Now we practice Emotional Vipassana. Whenever you experience a strong uncomfortable emotion or feeling in the present, close your eyes and sink into the feeling. As you do, familiarize yourself with the unique sensations or “feeling flavor” of that uncomfortable feeling. Ensure that you are unconditionally *with* that feeling, truly experiencing it and observing it without needing it to change. After a time, see if you can name the feeling. If thoughts arise, just observe them in a detached way, as if they are rising like bubbles in the mind, and let them be there. You can do this step with yourself anytime, regardless of whether there is a particular feeling present; it’s simply much easier and more impactful when a strong emotion is present. This step, along with Step 3, are the two most crucial parts of the entire Completion Process. If you did not do any other part of the process, this would be enough because this is the step that facilitates emotional integration.

Here’s how this step works. When the average person begins to feel emotional pain, he subconsciously interprets that pain as something that is trying to hurt him. We feel like the underdog to our own pain. If emotional pain is a chronic aspect of someone’s life, then this subconscious interpretation leads to a kind of living hell. When we think that an emotional pain is trying to hurt us, it begins to feel like we are living with an enemy inside our own skin, as if an aspect of ourselves has turned against us and is trying to destroy us. But because it’s inside us, we can’t escape it.

From this point forward, it’s better to view emotional pain in a different way. Instead of viewing it as trying to hurt us, we need to view it as desperately crying out for our help. We need to adopt the perspective that our pain is like a child who doesn’t know how to make itself feel better. It’s doing everything it can to get our attention so we can “take care of it.” And to take care of it, we must first embrace it and listen to what it’s trying to convey.

In other words, our emotions are like messengers, and we must embrace emotional pain and listen to what it is trying to tell us. By allowing the feeling, listening to it, experiencing it, and being completely *with it*, the lost aspects of ourselves are allowed to rejoin us. We also receive the message that the emotional pain is trying to send us.

This is why you will find that effortless realization and insight so often

accompanies this step. You can imagine what is happening in this step by thinking of yourself standing in a house. Imagine that your child self is outside the door, crying and trying to get in. You could try to avoid the child and avoid the child's desperation to join you in the house, or you could go open the door and let the child in.

When you go in the direction of your emotions and experience them by opening yourself up to them, then you are, in essence, opening the door for your child self to rejoin you and thus fully integrate with you.

So during this step, you essentially stop running from the tornado that is chasing you and run right into it instead. Once you develop a willingness to feel, eventually your emotions will no longer frighten you. This is the beginning of true and lasting peace, from which so many good things are possible. You'll no longer feel any need to try to sedate, control, and avoid your negative emotions. Self-medication will no longer be needed.

Your emotions are the truest representation of who you are. When you move away from the way you feel, you are doing the same thing to yourself that a parent might do when he or she moves away from a child who is crying to be held, fed, or changed.

This step is important because it allows us to consider that if we have a strong emotional feeling, there must be a good reason to feel that way. In other words, there must be a genuine reason why we are experiencing such intense emotion. In today's world, there are plenty of escape routes to take to run away from the truth of oneself in the current moment. But you will soon find that every one of these escape routes is a dead end. You will run and run and run until you realize that the running will never end; it's *the running away* that is, in fact, torturing you.

By giving yourself your unconditional attention and presence in the face of an uncomfortable emotion, without being in a hurry to get over it, you are giving yourself the unconditional love that you did not get enough of when you were young. This is what is really doing the healing. Nothing on this earth is more healing than unconditional, focused presence.

Physical Sensations May Arise

When you are doing this part of the process, don't be surprised if you begin to experience extreme sensations in your body. When an aspect of your consciousness rejoins you, it can give rise to dramatic sensations, not unlike the sudden injection of a drug into your system. The drug might make you feel as if your whole body is tingling or as if you are expanding or shrinking or that your

skin is on fire. Don't be surprised if you experience tactile hallucinations, Lilliputian hallucinations (where you might feel very tiny or very large, or see things around you in distorted sizes), and physical sensations that are disorienting or painful.

Know that it is not uncommon to feel these things and you will get through it. In fact, when this happens during the Completion Process, it's actually a really good sign. It means that you are integrating the emotion with the rest of yourself *in the now*, as if a puzzle piece is being clicked back into its correct place.

My recommendation is to breathe through these strong sensations and surrender to them with the intention of allowing them to run their course. Sometimes when we focus on the feeling, it intensifies, while at other times, just the fact that we are willing to be present with the way we feel brings us relief. Just let whatever surfaces, surface and let whatever changes, change.

On occasion people will experience numbness as a result of doing this part of the exercise. It's as if the attention to the emotion makes it "go away." But in reality, it has not gone away. Some people even fall asleep. If this happens, the person is encountering a defense mechanism within himself or herself. The defense mechanism is *unconsciousness*. Sometimes, when our emotions are too painful and we can't do anything about them, we cope by becoming unconscious of the way we feel or even becoming unconscious in general. If this happens to you, treat it like any other response; stay present with your unconsciousness. It's a layer that you need to let yourself sink into and drop through the bottom of.

In other words, treat any numbness you feel like it is its own emotion that you would lovingly and unconditionally experience. If you fall asleep, let yourself fall asleep. If you experience hopelessness or frustration because the feeling "went away," then experience that feeling fully. Welcome any and all experiences and feelings because that is the way you will heal.

Dealing with Hopeless Feelings or Mental Stories

You may run into a thought and subsequent feeling of "I can't" at this stage of the process. Be aware that this is just a reflection of the hopelessness that you felt long ago. When people struggle with shadow work, it's usually because there is a layer of hopelessness (such as the feeling that *this idea won't work*) that needs to be integrated before they can progress. Be present with whatever arises, regardless of what it is. We don't have a goal for this process. We are not in a rush. Our purpose for doing it is to rejoin ourselves and whatever is true right here and now.

If at any point in the process the feeling becomes difficult or unbearable, you

can get through it by making sure that you breathe deeply and deliberately. The breath can create space within you for the emotion so you can stay with it. Imagine your breath embracing the emotion.

During this step, we want to stay with the sensations of the feeling, not the mental story about it. For example, “I feel unwanted” is a story about a sensation. “I feel heaviness or buzzing” is a feeling. In order to truly get out of the mental story and into the feeling, try to describe, recognize, or notice anything you can about the unique quality of the sensation of the emotion or feeling. Sometimes you need to let it play around inside you and even spread throughout your whole body; welcome it more and more, and see if you can name the feeling. Familiarize yourself with it. The stronger the emotion is, the easier this will be.

Don’t be surprised if strong emotional reactions come up as a result of being with your emotion. For example, you might find that you begin weeping uncontrollably or shaking. I encourage you to fully allow these reactions to flow. Don’t suppress them in any way. Often emotional energy needs to move. This is incredibly healing. The body is clearing itself.

If you are facilitating someone with this process, and the person doing the process begins to cry, you might notice that she is tempted to try to compose herself. It’s natural, but it actually impedes healing. It is better to gently encourage her to allow whatever reaction she is having while staying present with the feeling.

Recognizing “Cover Emotions”

With this step, we learn to become aware of “cover emotions.” Cover emotions function exactly like ice on the surface of a deep lake. In the same way that the ice covers the water, a cover emotion exists to cover another emotion below it. Ice on a lake prevents you from falling through and into the water, and in the same way, the cover emotion prevents you from sinking into and feeling the emotion that it is designed to cover. Cover emotions exist to keep us out of lower vibrational states. They are natural defense mechanisms within the emotional body. Anger is often a cover emotion for fear, just as hatred is often a cover emotion for hurt. Desperation is often a cover emotion for despair. Numbness is often a cover emotion for shock or confusion. When we are completely present with an emotion, we often drop into an even deeper level of emotion. It’s a bit like an emotional version of falling through the ice into the deep water below.

If we feel as if we have encountered a cover emotion, we can ask ourselves,

“What is below this?” If you are facilitating someone in the process, you can ask the person: “What’s underneath this feeling? Is there something deeper or more painful there?” In this way, we encourage ourselves or someone else to metaphorically fall through the ice. Once the person goes deeper, he or she will have greater access to the causation of the real emotion; the real emotion is the one that the cover emotion might be trying to save or rescue him or her from.

If we feel particularly resistant to this part of the process or feel like we can’t allow ourselves to be pulled more deeply into the emotion, we need to ask ourselves, “Am I ready to go into this feeling?” This question places us in an attitude of choice. In choice, there is freedom.

Often the emotions that we are most resistant to are feelings of powerlessness. Making a choice about whether or not to be with a feeling of powerlessness is in itself empowering. And honestly, sometimes what we need for our healing is just to recognize that we have choice.

For this reason, we must honor the answer regardless of what it is. We don’t have to do what we don’t want to do. There is a huge difference between doing something that scares us and that we really don’t want to do, and doing something that scares us but that we really *do* want to do. Truly we should only be doing the latter.

Therefore, if you are facilitating someone in the Completion Process, you must let him choose. You must give the other person the reigns to steer his own life. This is the only way lasting healing can occur. If someone doesn’t feel ready and doesn’t want to go into a feeling, even with the reassurance that you are there with him, you need to give him permission not to enter that emotion. If this happens, then I recommend that you help him to be present with the emotions that arise as a result.

I believe that we especially need to help the other person feel the feeling of empowerment that comes as a result of *getting to choose*. If we feel as if we are being pulled out of the emotion, but we really *are* ready to be with it, we can imagine seeing, feeling, sensing, or hearing ourselves being separated from whatever is pulling us out of the feeling. For example, if you are the one going through the process, you could see your mind pulling you out of the emotion with ropes or strings. Then you can imagine lovingly and knowingly (and with gratitude for the mind because it’s trying to save you) cutting those cords or strings so that you fall away from the mind and into the emotion.

STEP 3: VALIDATE THE PRESENT FEELING.

In this step, we give the emotion or feeling the message that we are completely with it, that we see it as valid, that we care about it, that we are ready to listen, that we want to know what it has to say, and that we are open to fully receiving it. This is the validation that we didn't get growing up. This is the unconditional love that we didn't get, quite likely because the people in our lives didn't know how to give it. This is what we have been wanting all our lives, and to give this gift of validation to ourselves is life changing.

This step is the opposite of self-abandonment. It allows your intense emotional feeling to offer up to you the memory that it is attached to. It's what makes your subconscious feel safe enough to offer up the original source of the feeling to your conscious awareness.

You may choose to use affirmative mantras during this step to deepen your ability to truly allow the emotion to feel validated, to trust your presence and truly accept the validation you offer. As long as it feels strong to you, any affirmative mantra will do.

Here are some examples of statements that people might repeat to themselves or say out loud.

- “I am completely here with you (or with this) right now.”
- “I am here with you in this.”
- “I’m with you no matter what.”
- “I am open and ready to feel this.”
- “I am open and willing to receive anything you want or need to show me.”
- “I choose to feel this unconditionally.”
- “I welcome this feeling.”

Basically, any words that help you to complete this first level of validation are worth saying and repeating because they will help you stay calm and focused. The reality is that the feeling *is valid*, it is there for a reason, it has meaning, and it is part of you. That is why it is so important for you to validate it to yourself.

STEP 4: INVITE THE MEMORY TO SURFACE.

In this step, use the sensations of the “feeling flavor” as if they were a rope

connecting you to the origin or causation of that very feeling. Ask yourself: “When was the first time I felt this feeling?” Instead of mentally chasing the answer, let your being offer it up to you, like a bubble floating up from the depths of the ocean.

We don’t need to conceptually re-experience full memories to integrate an aspect of ourselves that is frozen in the past. Sometimes just being with a feeling enables us to integrate the emotional charge of a memory, which might be the only part that is frozen or stuck. The actual memory never surfaces. If we only need emotional integration, a tangible memory is unlikely to come.

If we become consciously aware of an actual memory, we are meant to gain wisdom from mentally re-experiencing and interacting with it. In other words, we are *meant* to become aware of that memory because, in doing so, we are assisted in our current development. Often the mind and the emotion both are in need of healing and integration. When this is the case, memories surface as a result of asking the question, “When was the first time I felt this exact feeling?” Another way to approach this is to ask the feeling itself (as if it were a separate being): “When was the first time I felt *you*?”

Keep in mind that we have a limited view of memory. We rely on the visual aspect of our lives so heavily that we forget that there are many different kinds of memory. Our bodies can remember sensations, smells, sounds, or feelings. So just because you don’t “see” anything, doesn’t mean you aren’t getting back a memory. Also, because we were feeling beings instead of thinking beings when we were very young, some of the earliest memories we have consist of only emotional or sensation memory.

For example, a person who is recalling a memory in the womb of a mother who didn’t want the pregnancy will often not see anything. Instead, she might have an intense, all-consuming feeling of being stuck and unwanted.

It’s tempting when we want to understand *why* we feel the way we feel to try to rush this process. We might try to go looking for the memory mentally, but doing it this way, we tend to get ourselves off track. Instead, I recommend that you learn to take a backseat and treat the inside of your body as if it were a movie screen. Simply wait, watch, and feel for what shows up on its own. Don’t forget it may appear in the form of an image, a smell, a taste, or a feeling. Work with whatever kind of memory surfaces, no matter how fragmented it may seem. Work with whatever comes up, even if it is not what you expected.

Trust that your being knows what needs integration, and be open to surprises. If you doubt the realness or the truth of what you are remembering, try to set that thought aside by simply letting it be there, and continue to remain open to whatever other things come up. At this point, it’s not about how true or untrue,

or real or not real something is. It's about your being trying to re-integrate itself in the way it feels it needs to.

If no memory surfaces after a long period of time, allow yourself to stay longer with whatever sensations are happening in real time. Then decide whether you want to gradually come back to the present moment or whether you want to do a visualization involving your inner child.

If you want to do a visualization involving your inner child, imagine that your inner child (at whatever age you intuitively see him or her) is standing or sitting in front of you and is experiencing the exact same emotion that you are experiencing right now. Then jump to Step 8 of the Completion Process with regard to your visualized inner child and go through the remainder of the Completion Process just as you would have done if a memory had come to your awareness.

Memories are buried deeper for some of us than for others. We need to remind ourselves that if no memory comes up, that's OK too. We are doing enough just by being present with ourselves and by offering our being the opportunity to re-integrate in whatever way possible.

STEP 5: RE-EXPERIENCE THE MEMORY.

When an earlier memory surfaces, observe it and experience the memory in whatever way it comes to you. Take time to be present with the intensity of the feeling of the memory. You are in essence allowing yourself to emotionally re-experience the original memory.

At this point, we want to fully experience the memory as it is. This is just a deeper level of integration. We are taking our Emotional Vipassana practice in Step 2 to the next level. We are gifting our inner child with the same unconditional, focused presence that we gave to ourselves earlier.

You will often find that as you do this step, even more of the memory reveals itself to you. It unfolds before your eyes and may even begin to make sense. Sometimes when we are in a memory, we will not initially witness it in first-person perspective. We may be observing the event as if we were a narrator or an audience member watching the scene. This is especially true if we are dealing with a memory that was particularly traumatic and caused us to dissociate.

However, witnessing it now in first-person perspective is important to integration. So if you are not in first-person perspective, merge into first-person perspective and experience the memory from that point of view. In other words, become your child self in the scene.

If you feel that you absolutely can't handle participating in this memory in the first-person perspective, then don't force yourself. Wait until it feels less frightening, and then you may be able. If that feeling does not happen this time, that is OK. You can still progress through the rest of the Completion Process, with some amount of distance between yourself and your child self, who is in the memory. However, keep in mind that if you don't merge into first-person perspective in the memory, you will most likely have to return to this memory at a later date when you are ready to do so. You'll simply integrate more of yourself each time you return. Think of it as the difference between taking a bite out of a cookie and eating the whole thing.

STEP 6: VALIDATE THE FEELING WITHIN THE MEMORY.

This is the point where you let the emotion from the past know you are completely *with* it, that you see it as *valid*, that you *care about it*, that you are ready to *listen*, and that you want to know what it has to say. Give yourself permission to fully receive the message from this original emotion, the one that arose in Step 5.

Step 6, in conjunction with Step 5, forms crucial aspects of memory work related to trauma. Many people who are familiar with trauma know that dissociation can be triggered by trauma. Dissociative states are psychological states where someone separates from his or her experience.

Dissociation is a defense mechanism that enables us to avoid unpleasant experiences; there are mild and severe forms of it. At the mildest end of dissociation, a person could simply daydream instead of focusing on what she is doing or experiencing in the moment. Or a person might go numb. At the severe end of the dissociation spectrum, a person might detach from her reality completely and start to experience periods of time where she loses a sense of her own identity or creates new identities.

Earlier in the book, we discussed the fact that everyone has experienced trauma, and therefore everyone has experienced post-traumatic stress to some degree. Today's common wisdom seems to indicate that dissociation is a symptom of post-traumatic stress. But the real truth is quite the opposite. Dissociation is, in fact, the *cause* of post-traumatic stress.

Consciousness can divide itself. We live in a universe where the only reason you perceive yourself as one person throughout time is because your own

consciousness is arranging that perception for you for the purpose of learning. We covered this idea briefly in Chapter 4 when we learned about time. This means even though we perceive ourselves as singular, finite beings, this is an illusion.

As we discussed in a previous chapter, our consciousness can split itself in the same way that a river splits off into streams. And this is exactly what the consciousness is doing when someone dissociates in a moment of trauma. Part of the person goes forward while part of him or her branches off and remains stuck at the moment of trauma because it feels it cannot “go through” the experience. In essence, then, an aspect of our being is frozen in time. Like a skipping CD, the part of yourself that dissociated never progresses past that moment in the song, but just keeps replaying itself over and over in your unconscious mind.

When we dissociate, we don’t allow ourselves to actually experience what is occurring. This may serve us in the moment because it enables us to focus all of our energy toward surviving either mentally, emotionally, or physically, or all three. Because the consciousness splits off during a moment of trauma, your brain stores traumatic memory in a different way than it would store normal memories. Traumatic memories are not processed or integrated into a person’s ongoing life in the same way that normal memories are.

This is one reason why it’s often so difficult for people to consciously recall their traumatic memories. Some years down the line, when we have achieved safety, the old memory, especially the emotions associated with the memory, begin to try to re-integrate it. This is when we start having flashbacks or begin to feel triggers.

In order to become whole again, we must re-integrate the aspect of ourselves that was split off in the moment of trauma, and to do that, we must experience the memory that we dissociated from. We must, in essence, re-experience the traumatic experience that caused a part of ourselves to dissociate.

Experiencing the Memory

This part of the Completion Process is where we can move through the re-experience of a memory from first-person perspective and thereby allow our fragmented self (the one that was stuck in the past) to rejoin us in the present and to find resolution. This is the real way to “cure” post-traumatic stress disorder.

Now, if you don’t have PTSD, you might be thinking, what does this have to do with me? The truth is that there are mild forms of dissociation that occur when someone experiences any traumatic event that they cannot resolve in the moment. And *any* dissociation leads to a split consciousness or a “split self.”

Part of you does not move forward into the now.

So, for example, small children at a birthday party for their brother or sister might become jealous because they aren't getting any presents. They are too young to understand why they are being excluded, and this can be traumatic for a child. If the child is shamed for the feeling of jealousy, the child then has to find a way to reject (and therefore suppress) the aspect of self that felt jealous. He must *dissociate* from the aspect of himself that felt jealous. But that aspect of self that felt jealous didn't go away. It stayed frozen at the moment it dissociated from the child, and it became a subconscious aspect of the self. Because the Law of Attraction is still responding to it, the person will attract reflections of that lost self that felt jealous.

The reflections felt in the present day will be circumstances and events in his adult life that cause him to feel jealous. The unintegrated jealous self is being triggered in an effort to try to rejoin the rest of the human being who it belongs to. So this adult might feel jealous of a coworker who is getting all the attention at work. The first adult has no idea that this strong jealous emotion is in fact just a reflection of a past event he doesn't even remember, related to the part of himself that dissociated from himself as a small child at the birthday party.

By re-experiencing the memory (this time *fully* experiencing it), the adult is able to move through the memory and re-unite himself. This is done by being completely with the strong emotional feeling, affirming that it is valid, affirming that it is cared about, and that the person is ready and willing to hear what the memory wants him to know. This approach is the exact opposite of the way the strong emotion was approached the first time around, which was with an unwillingness to deal with it.

This time, as adults going through the Completion Process, we are demonstrating that we are now open to fully receiving it. Long ago, by dissociating, we sent ourselves the message that we would not be there with ourselves during a difficult experience. For the sake of survival, we unconsciously gave ourselves the message that we didn't have our own backs and we were not there for ourselves.

Now during this step, Step 6, the healing action we take is that we give ourselves the opposite message, the healing message: "I am here with myself, and so I am not alone in this. I care about you (my child self), and the way you feel is important and valid."

A Memory beneath a Memory

Sometimes a memory will surface from your adult or teen life. If this occurs,

before we move on to the next steps of the process, we use the memory to see if there is anything deeper. Usually when we have an upsetting memory that comes from our teenage years or our adult life, it's not the root memory. It is instead an earlier reflection of the root memory, which usually occurred between conception and age 8.

You'll remember that earlier I described "cover emotions," which exist to cover up or mask our deeper, more painful emotions. This memory of a teenage or adult trauma is a bit like a cover in that it is merely a reflection and not the one that started it all. So at this point, we would want to encourage ourselves to fall through the ice with this memory the same way that we fell through the ice to figure out the deeper emotions.

For this to work, we must be fully merged in the first-person perspective with our child self and again ask the question, "When was the first time I experienced this exact same feeling?" Remember, it's crucial to witness the reflective memory in first-person perspective if we are to use that memory to access the even earlier memory. So merge into first-person perspective in the teenage or adult memory before trying to go deeper into an earlier memory.

When an earlier memory surfaces, repeat Steps 5 and 6 with this memory before continuing with the rest of the Completion Process. You don't need to come back to a reflective memory unless you feel compelled to do so, because by altering the causation in the deeper memory, you automatically affect the later memory that is causally linked to it.

Be aware that it's possible that if a later memory is traumatic, we need to move all the way through the Completion Process with that later memory (one that happened past age 8) before we can go back and access an earlier memory that it is causally linked to. Remain open to doing it this way, if the earlier memory will not come to your awareness at a given time. When you feel as if you have completely surrendered to experiencing the memory in whatever way it comes up, and you feel the release or relief that comes as a result of no longer resisting the experience of it, you can then move on to the next step.



STEPS 7–13 : VALIDATION AND RELIEF

When we experience something traumatic, we often get stuck in a kind of holding pattern where we can't get past what happened. At the time, we did not know how to resolve the situation. We felt some degree of powerlessness. We assumed there was no way to improve the situation, and as a result, many of our needs went unmet.

But by re-experiencing the memory and then altering the memory so as to create mental and emotional resolution, we create resolution in our current life. We begin to meet emotional needs and set ourselves free from the past. The next seven steps in the Completion Process walk you through this part of the process. I have detailed below the key points to understand as you go through Steps 7–13.

STEP 7: STEP INTO ADULT PERSPECTIVE WITHIN THE MEMORY.

When you feel ready, step out of the perspective of your younger self and instead begin to view the scene from the perspective of your current adult self. This is the step where the adult self intervenes. You are still within the memory, but now you are watching it as an adult, not as a child or younger person.

This is the step that enables us to re-parent ourselves. The child self may feel as if he has no advocates, no one to speak up for him and protect him. This is

your opportunity to be that advocate for your child self. When we experience trauma, we feel powerless. In this step, we are taking our power back.

The child self doesn't need to grow up and defend himself. The child self needs to be allowed to be a child and to have an adult who parents him in the proper way. The child self needs an adult who cares about him enough to be unconditionally present, to meet his needs, and to alter the circumstance so the child's experience feels better.

As you enter this step in the process, be aware that you may need to introduce yourself to your child self if he doesn't immediately recognize you. Your child self may not instantly trust you, so you may have to demonstrate your unconditional care for a while before he can come to trust you. This is all good. When you are demonstrating your unconditional care for your inner child, you are demonstrating your unconditional care for yourself. So as an adult, you are also learning to trust yourself again. It may be helpful to tell your inner child what year it actually is and what is going on or why you have chosen to come back in time to interact with him.

STEP 8: VALIDATE THE CHILD'S EMOTIONS.

In this step, the adult takes the time to offer comfort, affection, and unconditional, focused presence to your child self. The object is to validate the child's emotions. What I mean is that you are validating the emotions you felt as a child within that memory. Clearly and gently give the child the message that it's all right and it's OK to feel how she feels and give the child permission to fully experience her feelings. If you feel ill-equipped to do this yourself, then call in the Safe Support Figure that you created in Step 1 to validate the emotion your child self is feeling.

This validation step is the step in the process that most inner-child therapies or approaches seem to skip. In my mind, this is a travesty because it's the most crucial step when we are doing inner-child work. When we are working with the inner child, we usually rush to take the child away from the feeling, wanting to immediately make her feel better. By doing this, we miss what the child needs and we also send the message that the way she is feeling has to change because something is wrong with it.

But skipping this crucial point of validation is unwise because the cause of most dissociation in children is having their emotions invalidated, dismissed, or disapproved of. The children learned early on that they were expected to separate from an aspect of themselves, and they learned to banish it to the

subconscious. In doing so, these children became fractured.

In other words, it's the invalidation, dismissal, and disapproval of a child's emotions that causes him to fragment and be unable to move through the experience and integrate the feeling or event within himself when something traumatic happens. And we all know the outcome: the person becomes wounded and reactive. He grows up and starts to manifest experiences that mirror the original trauma, but now that mirror is happening during his adult life. Thus we have the reason for the Completion Process in the first place.

Now in this step, Step 8, you can personally give your child self the validation he requires within this memory, and in doing so, you are fixing the skipping CD. You are allowing your child self to move through the original experience and integrate the experience so that he can move forward. This creates the ability and willingness for the fractured and stuck aspect of your own consciousness to rejoin you, and you will become more whole. To use the earlier metaphor of the river and streams, you are taking the streams that had branched off and bringing them back to join the main river.

How to Validate Emotions

Here is an example of how we might validate our inner child's emotions. Sticking with the earlier story line, let's assume that we joined our inner child in a memory that involved a birthday party. At that birthday party for a sister or brother, our inner child felt jealous because he was not getting any presents. This made the child feel unloved, unvalued, and insignificant. It also filled her with a sense of lack because she was watching another child get so much abundance, love, value, and significance.

In our example, now when we are serving as the parent figure to our child self in the scene, we don't instantly try to make our child self feel better or less jealous. We don't instantly get her a toy. Instead we validate the child's feelings. Validating feelings is not the same as validating that they are correct in their version of truth, in the event that the validation of their truth will do them more harm than good. In other words, we don't say, "You're right; they don't love you and they don't value you, and the other child is more significant than you."

Instead we comfort the child and validate the child's feelings by saying something like, "You're right to feel this way. Anyone who was in this situation would feel this way. It's totally understandable how you could feel like people love the other child more. It makes sense that you would feel sad because you aren't getting what the other person is getting. I'd feel that way if I were you. But I'm here with you no matter what. It's OK that you feel this way. You have a

right and a valid reason to feel the way you do.” Then we remain present with the child however he or she feels as a result of the validation.

Keep in mind that, on occasion, a child might actually need his version of truth (not just his emotions) validated in order to move forward. For example, if a child is being abused, but is constantly told by the perpetrator that he is just being given a bath in the places that he is dirty, this can create cognitive dissonance in the child great enough to be its own state of mental trauma. Therefore, during this step, we would also affirm that he is right in feeling that he is being abused.

It’s natural to have a reaction to being validated when it finally happens, and usually the reaction is a good one. The child experiences a release and a sense of acceptance, and he or she can shift into an emotional readiness to move forward on his or her own into a solution. However, sometimes more painful emotions, such as sadness, come up. When this is the case, continue to validate those new feelings and remain present with those feelings as well. The point here is that you must be unconditionally there with the child, without needing the child to feel different than how they feel. This step is not about feeling better; it’s about being with the child’s feelings. Remember, we are never ready to find a solution until we have accomplished this step.

If you truly feel that you can’t do this step in the process for your inner child, then get your Safe Support Figure to do it. For example, if your figure was an angel, then imagine the angel coming into the scene with you and comforting and validating your inner child instead.

Sometimes, in order to do this step well, we need to quite literally stop time and give the child all the time he or she needs to process the validation, accept it, and experience the support we are giving them. We must freeze the scene. During this step, we are usually still seeing the memory in motion. So the dogs may still be running around and the parents may still be yelling and so on, but we want to do something that helps our minds see the scene as frozen.

If this extra time is necessary for the child, I often suggest that the adult helper snap her fingers. I tell the child that when he hears the sound, the memory will stand still. It should look to them as if they pushed the pause button on a video and everything became still. Everything within the scene needs to be paused midmotion so the only things that are still in a state of live action are your adult self and your child self and, if the case calls for it, the third-party Safe Support Figure. After this group has moved through this step and the next two steps of the Completion Process with the scene around them on “pause,” remember to snap your fingers again, which will restore the memory to full motion.

STEP 9: AWAIT RELIEF.

At this point, wait for your childhood self in the scene to naturally move in the direction of feeling relief. Keep in mind that your childhood self may just need you to confirm that you will be there for her forever, just as she is, regardless of what happens. So offer this protection and reassurance to your childhood self.

For example, a child who loses a favorite toy doesn't need to be told to get over it or when to stop feeling bad about it. They need to be allowed to move entirely through the emotional experience and fully feel it (because the feelings are valid), and the improvement eventually happens on its own. The child may get mad and then collapse in tears, and then, if the child has unconditional, focused presence from an adult, he will naturally stop crying and resume interest in something else or come up with a solution on his own.

This is what will happen in your visualization of the memory. You may notice that your inner child, once validated and given your unconditional, focused presence, may instantly start to feel relief. Or they might have a kind of emotional release and start crying, only to very quickly resume their desire to play. Their overall vibration improves on its own in response to the previous step.

However, if you notice that there is no improvement, as can be common with an intense emotion like grief, then you need to give your inner child the message that you are not going to rush her, that nothing is more important than her, and that you care about her process above all else. You may need to simply stay with the child unconditionally while she experiences whatever emotion she is experiencing for as long as it takes. When this is the case, just keep affirming that you will be there for as long as She wants you to be there, no matter what. Have faith that eventually the child will feel enough relief that she will begin to move toward improvement, such as sitting up and sniffing or smiling or wanting to do something else with you.

If it's clear that the child just needs us to be there and our presence is the most healing step for her at this time, she may not actually progress naturally into a better feeling state. If this happens, we have two choices. We may choose to mentally leave our adult aspect there with the child and return our consciousness to the room we are sitting in, or we can skip to Step 15 and take the child self to the Safe Haven, continuing to be present with the child and observing how the child feels when she reaches the Safe Haven.

An inability to reach the stage of "relief" is particularly common if people have experienced trauma involving their negative emotions. So, for example, if a person grew up in a home where it was *never* OK to be unhappy and especially

bad to stay unhappy, often this person needs to learn it's OK to be unhappy or stay unhappy. What is really going on is that the aspect of him that needs to be re-integrated is the aspect of him that is permanently *unhappy*. Within the memory-turned-visualization, the way the child self feels will *not* improve because the acceptance and unconditional, focused presence given to the unimproving nature of his emotions is what is needed.

STEP 10: CALL BACK OTHER FRACTURED ASPECTS OF SELF.

This is the step where you “call back” the other fractured aspects of yourself that are present in that one particular scene that you have been viewing. Lovingly merge those long-lost fractured aspects of the child into the core of your childhood self. Now you will be dealing with only one child self in the scene, as compared to having to deal with a child and a number of fractured parts of that child. Be aware that in a moment of trauma, we may not only split off from ourselves so as to create one fracture within our stream of consciousness, we may split off many more times. This is especially true if the memory was particularly traumatic.

We may have other fractured aspects that are not frozen. I call these the “coping aspects.” A coping aspect of our consciousness is a fracture of the self that chooses to leave the traumatic experience so as to experience something else that feels better or safer. For example, a girl who is being molested may fracture into multiple selves at the time of trauma. One aspect may shrink and project itself into the carpet fibers as if it is hiding. Another might choose to shrink and go into the snow globe sitting on the table. Another might go into a fantasy life where she is a princess. Another aspect might project itself into the clouds or into outer space. And yet another aspect might hide in the closet.

By calling back all of these fractured aspects, we are asking them to be willing to unconditionally rejoin the primary, traumatized child self. The message to those aspects is: “It’s time to come back and move forward because there is a solution now.”

When those fractured aspects merge back into the child self, each aspect receives the same healing. As a result, the adult person now has much more consciousness available in much the same way that a river would have more water flowing through it once a number of branched-off streams have rejoined it. So you can see how this step adds an extra dimension to the Completion Process

and is critical to you becoming whole again. This step in the process simply speeds up the healing involving a certain traumatic experience and makes the likelihood of returning to that specific memory much lower.

However, if you discover yourself returning to the same memory again and again when you are doing the Completion Process, it's not because you are doing anything wrong, and it doesn't mean the process isn't working. What is happening is that you had split into multiple fragments at that previous point in time as a result of that trauma, and each time you go back to the specific memory, you are integrating an entirely different aspect of yourself. So if you do get called back to the same memory to integrate additional aspects of yourself, simply honor the fact that the time is right to finally have those additional aspects healed.

There are many, many reasons why the fractured aspects of our consciousness might not merge and integrate all at once. But commonly, when the fractured aspects of ourselves don't integrate all at once, it's because the aspects of our consciousness that split off at the time of trauma had different unmet needs. Therefore, it is likely that if you return to an already visited memory to integrate another inner-child aspect that split off, you will find that the child will have different needs than the previously integrated child self.

There are a number of ways this integration could appear. It may look like ghosts being sucked toward and into the inner child. It may look like blobs or energy fields rejoining the inner child. Or it may look like other duplicate children merging into one child. Be open to the way that your mind conveys this experience of the fractured aspects rejoining the core inner child.

STEP II: MEET THE CHILD'S NEEDS WITHIN THE MEMORY.

At this point, ask your child self in the scene if he or she feels ready to move forward emotionally and if he or she feels validated. Once the child gives you this feedback, you can take action to find a resolution to the situation at hand. This is where creativity and individuality are important. You must find out what need is not being met for the child and then meet it.

You can say things to your child self that makes her feel good. You can stand up for your child self. Give suggestions and take suggestions, but ultimately, trust yourself to know what she needs to do to alter the circumstance. Above all, trust the child self in the scene to know what she wants and needs, and honor the

individual needs that are being expressed. Seeing as how we have been unconditionally with the feeling and have given the feeling the message that it is valid and right to be there, this is the part where we consider what steps must be taken to help the child *feel better*.

The child self has different needs, depending on the traumatizing event. One child self may just want to be taken away from the memory into the Safe Haven and held indefinitely. One child may need to see resolution with regard to the particular event. For example, a child who had a particularly violent experience happen in his childhood home may be helped greatly by being allowed to set fire to that particular house.

The Completion Process is not a time to teach the inner child a lesson like “sometimes we have to learn to be alone,” or “you can’t live at college with your sister because it’s for big kids,” or “we don’t hit people.” When we are working to heal using the realm of imagination, there is no “reality” that needs to be accepted by the child. We are after one thing and one thing only—a feeling of completion. This means a child who is suffering because an older sibling went to college may need you to build her a little hiding place in her sibling’s dorm room so she can be with her beloved sibling at college. Or it might mean that your child wants to be held indefinitely, so find a way to have the child held indefinitely. It might mean the child wants new parents and a new life, and if so, the child gets new parents and a new life.

Imagine that there are no limits to freedom of imagination in this step. I find that the most common need, however, is the need for defense. When we experience something traumatic, we tend to feel powerless. This is especially true when we are children and have much less choice and control over our environment. So, often our child self needs our adult self to stick up for him or her.

When the Intensity Level Rises

It is tempting to decide that actions (such as yelling or violence) are all bad and thus avoid involving them in the visualization process. We need to understand that emotion is like a vibrational scale, with powerlessness at one end and states of joy and love at the other end. Revenge is, in fact, an *increase* in vibration from the vibration of powerlessness, despair, or fear. So is hatred and so is anger. Often the best way to get ourselves out of a vibration of powerlessness is to allow ourselves to move up the vibrational scale by visualizing some strong action being taken, even if it is revenge, a violent outburst, breaking something, or destroying something.

This is the part of the Completion Process that invites the most resistance from people who would rather teach their inner child to take the high road. This is also the part of the process that invites resistance from people who feel that no violence should ever be entertained by our minds, lest it lead to more external violence. So don't be surprised if you feel yourself having a visceral reaction to what I've just suggested. That is normal. What most of us don't understand is that we run more of a risk of *actually* creating violence in our day-to-day life if we don't let ourselves move through and beyond the steps of revenge, anger, and defense in this safe, imaginary setting. The person who does not allow himself to do that usually never gets *beyond* the feeling of victimization.

Also, the person who doesn't allow himself to do that leaves it to the subconscious mind to fantasize about those things. This is dangerous because it can lead to more reactivity in the present day. A person who subconsciously fantasizes about revenge, but consciously condemns it, is at risk for either exacting passive-aggressive revenge or for acting on impulse and actually getting revenge. This is often the case with crimes of passion. Visualizing acts of violence or defense for the sake of mental and emotional healing (or increasing your vibration relative to a trauma) is not the same thing as fantasizing about violence or homicidal ideation. There is a clear aim in this circumstance, which is to allow those thoughts and feelings full expression within the safe environment so as to get to a feeling space *beyond* them, where they no longer exist.

The person who lets himself consciously experience revenge or violently defend himself *in this process for the sake of healing* not only moves beyond victimization, but also allows himself to move through and beyond the need or desire to get revenge, defend himself, or see someone hurt. In other words, once we move through and beyond these "darker" feelings and urges and needs, we *find they don't exist anymore*.

When doing the Completion Process, we cannot make a need or desire "right or wrong." We must do what needs to be done in our visualization so that the inner child can move beyond the experience and rejoin the present. In our visualization, we aim for closure, no matter what it takes.

This step of the Completion Process is particularly raw and not for the faint of heart. But it's also the part that gives the Completion Process the potential to heal even the worst of traumas. An inner child, for example, who is being chronically sexually abused, may need to see his or her perpetrator shot, so they have no worry of future attacks. On the lighter end of things, an inner child who is being shamed by a parent may need the adult self to aggressively stand up for him or her against the parent.

I want to add that during this step, it may be tempting to try to help the parent in the scene or to counsel the perpetrator. This is not your job. In fact, often the need to help everyone is its own traumatic carryover from childhood. So, if the inner child would feel better if her parent or perpetrator was to get help, we bring a *third party* to the scene to do that. Some people may choose to visualize their parent or perpetrator being helped by angels or a psychologist or by spirit guides or by someone they trust in life. We continue using a third party to help, until the point that we are sure it's healing to us to give this help within our visualization.

Altering the Causation

During this step, we can ask the child in the memory or visualization what he or she needs or wants if anything were possible, and then visualize giving that to the child. Or we may intuitively know what the child in the scene needs. What we must keep in mind is that our priority during this step is to meet the unmet need in the memory. If the child needs to be able to talk to the parent and for the parent to listen, we make that happen. If the child needs us to defend him or her, we do that. If the child needs to be held so he or she can just grieve, we do that. If the child wants a specific toy, we give it to him or her. If the child wants a friend, we give him or her the perfect friend. If the child needs to reunite with a loved one who has died, we take him or her to meet with that person.

This is the step where we actually alter the causation of the experience. We find a kind of mental and emotional resolution to what happened, so we can integrate it further as something that *adds* to our conscious life instead of taking away from it. Because this is such an individual healing step, we will need to use our intuition to know what we uniquely need to achieve a feeling of resolution during this step.

If you are assisting someone else through this process, your job is to inspire complete creative control in the person you are facilitating. It is also your job to give permission to the person to step way outside her current mental restrictions (i.e., get outside the box) to meet the needs of her inner child. It is helpful to offer options to the person for potential resolution on the off chance that he or she is not currently aware of those options for resolution.

We should never aim to forgive someone or something during the Completion Process. Forgiveness cannot be forced. Nor should it even be a goal. You cannot, in fact, make up your mind to forgive someone. Forgiveness is the organic result of healing. Once we find resolution for a trauma, we are no longer held captive in a space of pain about it, and so the bigger picture of the meaning of the experience and even the gifts it brought to our life are revealed. Then and only

then can we stop condemning the experience. Then, and only then, can forgiveness begin to enter our reality.

STEP 12: CHOICE TO STAY OR GO.

When a feeling of relief has occurred as a result of taking action to change the circumstance in the memory, we give the child the choice to stay in the memory or visualization, or to go to the Safe Haven.

We need to trust this child to know what is best for him or her. Most often, the child self will desire to leave the scene entirely. But on occasion, the child self will not want to leave the scene and will want to move through and beyond the trauma within the context of the memory. This is OK, and it means that experience is the most healing and the most needed at this time. If the child decides to go to the Safe Haven, we jump to Step 14. If not, we continue to Step 13.

STEP 13: CHECK FOR COMPLETION.

If the child chooses to stay in the memory, we ask the child why he or she wishes to stay, and we respond accordingly. Sometimes when our child self does not want to leave, there may be additional fractured aspects that want to integrate but are still stuck. We can ask the fractured aspects to come forward from where they are hiding or stuck. We can ask them to merge as one, so we eventually are sitting across from only one child. The child, when asked again whether he or she wants to go to the Safe Haven, will now often say yes.

If the child chooses to stay in Step 13, we trust that the child knows what is best for him or her. In this step, we proceed to meet the child's needs in the memory itself. For example, the child may want to stay in the memory but add a pony. Or the child may want to stay in the memory, but have some other aspect of the memory altered, such as the childhood house.

One of the most common needs is that the child doesn't want to be alone, so we can leave our adult self or a playmate of his choosing with the child in the memory indefinitely. If you find that it is too difficult to leave an aspect of yourself in the memory with the inner child who wants to stay, create another being to keep the child company. Create someone who will never leave the child's side, who will protect him, who will be a good friend, and who will serve as a reliable and secure attachment figure.

A child may give a reason, making it apparent that the healing would be facilitated by the child staying there. For example, the child may say, “I don’t want to leave because then Mom would be lonely.” In that case, you may then offer to take Mom with the child to the Safe Haven, or give Mom someone else to keep her company. Or the child might say, “I want to go to school tomorrow,” or “I want to see how it all turns out,” suggesting that they genuinely wish to stay there. We need to trust our intuition about which feels the best to us and, therefore, which choice is in alignment with our overall healing.

Rather than taking an action, the child may just need to be told something that would make him or her feel better, such as, “You can call me anytime you want, and I’ll be there immediately.” Or the child may want to be hugged before you go. The overall objective is to meet the child’s final needs within the construct of the memory, rather than remove the child from the memory completely if they truly aren’t yet ready.

If the child chooses instead to go to the Safe Haven, then we either bring the child ourselves or have our Safe Support Figure bring the child.



STEPS 14 –18 : COMPLETION AND CLOSING

All life naturally flows in the direction of healing. To heal is to come back into a state of wholeness. Trauma creates fractures within the self. In order to become whole once more, the parts of us that are essentially stuck in time and only able to communicate with us through triggers must be retrieved. We must bring those aspects of ourselves from the past into the present so that the totality of our consciousness and the totality of our self are available to us. By intentionally integrating these fractured aspects of the self, we become whole. These last five steps in the process are described in detail in this chapter, explaining how to wrap up the process and return once again to conscious perspective.

STEP 14: ENTER SAFE HAVEN AND DEACTIVATE THE MEMORY.

In this step, we enter the Safe Haven with the child. As we proceed to enter, we use the secret entrance as well as our secret wave or phrase. We imagine the entrance closing behind us, separating us from the memory we have just come out of. This creates a sense of safety, but also distance from the memory, which is healing.

The feeling we want to give the child when he comes to the Safe Haven is that “it’s all over,” meaning the pain is over. We want to convey this in whatever way

feels best, so you can say it's like heaven, or tell him this place is a new place and it will be a new life of his choosing. All of his experiences will feel good to him from here on out.

Sometimes you will encounter a memory where your child self is an embryo or a baby in utero. When this is the case, you can keep the baby in the uterus and bring your mother, with you inside her, to the Safe Haven. Or you can put your baby self in a new womb—either a safe womb-like structure or a womb inside your ideal mother—and bring the baby self into the Safe Haven inside the womb or with the new mother.

The most important part about this step, as we enter the Safe Haven itself, is to make sure the memory that the child was taken out of is properly closed. You can do this by shrinking it into nothingness, burning it like a piece of paper, or popping it like a balloon. When we shrink, burn, or pop a memory, we are consciously deciding to make the memory *inactive*.

We imagine that we are looking back at the memory we just came from, as if we are watching it play out on a screen or inside a bubble. If the memory will not shrink, burn, or pop, it means that there may still be unresolved aspects of it. For example, we may have other fractured aspects of the self in the memory, or our being may want us to know something else about the memory for the sake of our understanding or healing, which could not happen unless we gained more details.

If the memory will not shrink, burn, or pop, you have two options. The first is to progress forward and leave the memory open. The second is to leave the child self that you took out of the memory with your Safe Support Figure in the Safe Haven, and go back into the memory by yourself in order to learn more from the memory or to help more childhood aspects. Make your choice based on which option feels the best to you at the time. If you choose to go back into the memory to recover other child aspects, repeat the previous steps of the Completion Process with each of those aspects and bring them to the Safe Haven. Simply be aware that you will therefore be working with multiple children instead of just one.

Don't worry about resolving everything. Your being wants integration, and so no child will be left behind. If you don't integrate a certain child aspect today, he or she will be integrated at another point.

STEP 15: CREATE PURIFICATION AND HEALING.

Once you've reentered the Safe Haven, the child is placed in the water and bathed as a purifying and healing ritual. The child drinks the water as well. This symbolically ends the previous life in the memory so that the child can begin a new life here in the Safe Haven.

In addition to purifying and healing, water also signifies the birth into a new phase of life, which is why it's so often used in baptisms. Sometimes the child self we bring to the Safe Haven has injuries. This water heals those injuries, creates even more distance from the memory, and helps with closure. The healing water symbolically says, "It's all over now. This is a new life you are living here in this place where you will never want for anything and you will never hurt again."

This bathing and healing are symbolic steps that help us bring the child into a new state, one that feels so much better for him or her. These symbolic steps help the mind and emotional self heal. Having access to water with magical properties also gives us the power to control our Safe Haven and our healing process. Imagine how nice life would be if we had a cure-all available to us whenever needed? This step helps put the pain of the aftermath of the memory to rest.

STEP 16: MEET THE CHILD'S NEEDS WITHIN THE SAFE HAVEN.

During this step, the final needs of the child self are met before we return our consciousness to real time. We meet those needs within the context of the Safe Haven. Our child self may want to eat a specific food. Our child self may want a permanent playmate or pet, such as a unicorn. Our child self may want to lie down and go to sleep with a stuffed toy, or our child may just want to be held by us while we are in the Safe Haven together. Whatever the child self needs or wants, we provide for him or her so that the child feels better. This brings the feeling state of the Completion Process to a resolution. This feeling is our indication that we're no longer mentally or emotionally stuck in the past.

STEP 17: OPTION TO STAY OR MERGE.

At this point, the child is given the choice to stay in the Safe Haven or to rejoin and merge with you as the adult perspective. If the child chooses to stay,

lovingly embrace and support that choice. The child self should never be forced to do anything she doesn't want to do. Sometimes the most healing thing for the child is to stay in the Safe Haven and to be allowed to experience a reality in which she doesn't suffer and in which all her needs are met. Think of this as experiencing heaven.

Very often, after experiencing healing, the child chooses to merge and agrees to "join you in the now." In this case, we imagine the child merging with our adult perspective and becoming a part of us, as if a puzzle piece is going back into place. This is very much like a stream rejoining the river it had branched off from. When this happens, the child self, in essence, grows up. During this step, it's common to feel the child self fast-forwarding through development to become the age we are now as he or she joins with us.

This step is the highest level of integration. I worry about saying that, because I don't want people to make this step their ultimate goal. If we have a goal like this in mind when we are starting the Completion Process, we cannot be present with and accepting of what is in front of us. We will be thinking more of our goal than about what our child self really needs. You don't want to try to force your inner child to integrate with you when your inner child might actually have other needs. Put your child first.

Sometimes it may feel to us as if the emotion is not altered or improved when we reach this step in the Completion Process. If this is the case, it's a good idea to use the "memory beneath a memory" technique (which was discussed in Step 6) to see if the emotion that is still present within the child might, in fact, stem from an even earlier memory.

How to Deal with Blending

If no earlier memory presents itself, and we still feel no improvement to our negative emotions, it may be that we have *blended* with the inner child rather than *merged*. Blending happens when a traumatic memory is unresolved and the missing aspect of our consciousness that experienced the trauma is co-existing with our own.

Blending is very different from merging. Think of it as two radio channels trying to come through at the same time. Distortion and interference occurs. This is common when a memory is traumatic enough that your consciousness wishes to first re-experience the memory from a third-person perspective to maintain distance from it.

For anyone concerned about *blending*, there is a solution. We may wish to add a large, mesh net to the Safe Haven and then imagine walking through the net.

The net will move through us and catch any inner child that we are partially and unconsciously blended with. We can then collect the child in our arms and ask the child if he or she needs to show us a memory. If the child says yes, we let the child lead us into a memory and we progress through part of the Completion Process once again, starting with Step 5.

Remember, it's up to us whether we feel ready to experience the memory in first-person perspective after witnessing it in third-person perspective. If not, we can simply remain our adult self through the duration of the process. If so, we can choose to merge into first-person perspective and re-experience the memory before removing our consciousness from the child's perspective, then go back to the adult perspective, and proceed with the remainder of the Completion Process.

If the child says no to needing to show us a memory, we progress through the Completion Process starting at Step 13, but adding emotional understanding and validation to the process of helping the child move forward to a space where integration can occur.

Sometimes with emotions like grief, no earlier memory actually exists. It's simply that the emotion needs to be allowed to be felt and then processed by your adult self in the now. When this is the case, the inner child will usually want to be held within the Safe Haven and have your loving presence while he or she simply feels the way he or she feels. Or the child will be in a positive state, but you will return to real time consciousness and have the feeling still present with you.

In this case, the emotion needs to be processed and integrated slowly. Instead of feeling like something has gone wrong, remind yourself that to rush the process is to disapprove of it. It can be profoundly healing and integrating to give the emotion *permission to stay*, if that's what it needs. This can lead to integration in and of itself.

Let your being re-adjust to the aspects of yourself that you have recovered as well as the sometimes difficult realizations that might come with it. This process is a bit like re-attaching a severed limb. Some re-attachment surgeries will be easier and quicker than others. And there is always a period of re-adjustment to what has been recovered.

Even if the child decides to stay in the Safe Haven, we have integrated a huge amount of the consciousness associated with that split-off self. We have also altered the vibration of the split-off self and, thus, the causation. Improving the vibration of the split-off self in any way alters our overall vibration. This makes us a match to improved experiences. Part of ourselves is now in the vibration of having our needs met. Keep in mind that we may wish at some point in the

distant future to come back and fully integrate with these aspects that chose to remain in the Safe Haven.

STEP 18: RETURN TO CONSCIOUS PERSPECTIVE.

We exit the Safe Haven, taking a few deep breaths as we bring our consciousness back to our perspective in real time. We take time to gently acclimate to our surroundings and the new level of integration and presence that we feel. We need to be present with the way we feel when we come out of the process. Our body needs to process the integration that just occurred.

It's crucial that whenever we do the Completion Process, we give our whole being time to adjust and to process what has just occurred. As mentioned previously, the Completion Process is akin to mental and emotional surgery, so we need to be calm. We need to help ourselves gently acclimate to the new state.

It's very beneficial during this phase to allow your body to gently move however it wishes to move. Slowly rocking back and forth and introducing natural movement to your hips and back are especially beneficial when you undergo a change to your system. Also, if you let yourself be completely present with the way you feel as a result of the Completion Process, you further integrate that new state of being.

When we come back to full consciousness after the Completion Process, usually everything feels different. It will feel as if you are experiencing "the now" for the very first time. Everything feels more real. Your physical environment looks much sharper or crisper. You begin to feel like you are really here. You feel raw, but being raw and being here is OK. You experience "the now" as a nice place, which is calmer and more peaceful. There is no hurry or rush. You may even feel as if your beliefs or troubling thoughts are suspended. Though this may be disorienting, you will feel a brand-new kind of clarity.

Amazing insights and new levels of self-awareness that were previously beyond our reach may come at this time. We may feel the need to mentally process what just happened. We may feel the need to share our new insights and knowledge. When our consciousness originally split, that particular part of our split-off self possessed knowledge, understanding, and perspective. When our consciousness rejoined us, we regained all of that knowledge, understanding, and perspective.

To stick with the analogy of the river, when the flow of water broke off into its

own stream, it took information with it. When that stream rejoins the main river, that information is now available to the river once more. This is why so much awareness returns each time we practice the Completion Process.

We may benefit from listening to soothing music or smelling essential oils at this time. We may also benefit from sitting in a calm place until we are ready to continue with our day. I also encourage people to write about the experience. When our mind can wrap itself around what just occurred, we become even more conscious of ourselves and the world we live in.

Watching for Physical Changes

Physical changes occur naturally as a result of your vibration being altered by the Completion Process. Many aspects of your life were a result of painful past experiences. When you “go back in time” and change the causation, it naturally alters aspects of your current life.

For example, you may have experienced your father as chronically unavailable. So in your adult life, you attract unavailable men as the reflection of that wound. If you go back into the memories where your dad was unavailable and allow yourself to heal within the memory, you might find that you are no longer attracted to unavailable men. Or you might decide to leave your husband, who is emotionally unavailable. Or you might find ways to meet your own emotional needs.

Physical changes to our lives also naturally follow suit when we make mental and emotional changes. We will make different choices, we will do different things, we will attract different people, and we will not have the same reactions we had before. Allow these physical changes from your integration to occur in the hours, days, weeks, and months that follow.

Anything you accomplished while engaging in the Completion Process serves to improve your overall vibration. Improving your vibration, even a little bit, improves what you are a match to experiencing in your conscious life. Even if we have not yet achieved full integration, we have still increased our vibration. As long as our intention is to use this process to heal and integrate, we can't mess it up or fail at the Completion Process.

There is no need to force your being to become whole any more than you have to force a cut on your hand to heal. Integration is a natural process and all forces in the Universe are on your side, working with or without your compliance. So take a deep breath and know with certainty, *you aren't going to get this wrong*.

In closing this section, I ask you to think about this reintegration process as if climbing Mount Everest: *you can reach the top*. If you stop at base camp during

one experience with the Completion Process, you will be taken back to that base camp the next time so you can try again to reach the summit. The view from the summit is so ineffably beautiful; my advice is to keep integrating because the view is worth it and so are you.

If Nothing Ever Works to Help You Feel Better (Including the Completion Process)

Do me a favor: Close your eyes for a few minutes, think back to your childhood, and try to remember some times when you were happy or excited or sad or mad or afraid. How did the people around you react? Which emotions did they consider good and therefore acceptable? Which emotions did they consider bad and therefore unacceptable? Which ones were you allowed to express, and which ones were you expected to suppress?

Now try to remember times when the people around you felt strong emotions. How were they treated by others? How did they deal with having those emotions? How were emotions dealt with in the family, culture, or society in which you grew up? What were you directly told or indirectly taught was the best way to handle your emotions?

An emotional control strategy is any behavior that is done specifically to control or regulate the way you feel. For example, drinking alcohol, going for a walk, playing a video game, writing affirmations, or binge eating are all emotional control strategies. What emotional control strategies did the people around you use or teach you to use when you were growing up? Keep in mind that the more the adults in your life felt the need to maintain control over how they felt, and therefore maintain control over how you felt, the more resistant they were to all emotions, both good and bad.

Now look at your life today: What ideas or control strategies are you still using that are a perfect reflection of the way you were consciously or subconsciously programmed to deal with emotion growing up? Based on your past, what did you decide was the meaning of that anger or sadness or fear?

It is tempting to think of it as an objective truth that certain emotions are bad and certain emotions are good based on the level of discomfort we feel. But what we must realize is that our judgment about the goodness or badness of an emotion has to do entirely with how we are socialized. It is possible for us to be taught that an emotion such as excitement is bad because it will lead to disappointment, or an emotion such as sadness is good because we have been raised in a culture that sees sadness as beautiful or indicative of real love. The way we have been socialized to see specific emotions determines our relationship to them and thus our overall experience of them.

It is normal to want to feel good. The basic survival instinct is to shy away from pain and move toward pleasure. This is not in and of itself a problem. This instinct does not inherently cause suffering. Suffering is caused when, instead of going toward pleasure, we resist the pain. And this is what we have done with emotion.

I want you to imagine that in the back of your head, there is a control switch, like a light switch on a wall—except instead of light and dark, this control switch controls good and bad. This switch is designed to be triggered whenever you encounter something that you have judged as *bad*. If you register something as bad, you register it as a threat. So when this switch goes on because it thinks you are encountering something bad, your body responds to that threat by going into *fight-or-flight* mode. You try to either escape from or fight with that thing. Escaping from something and/or fighting with something is nothing more than an attempt to *control* that thing, *control* yourself, or *control* the course of events. The thoughts we think about the emotion we are having cause us to immediately *add emotion to emotion*, and this is like adding kerosene to a fire that is already blazing. No matter what we do to feel better, nothing works.

For example, let's say growing up, when you expressed anxiety, your parent turned to you in an exasperated manner and said, "Stop being such a fraidy cat. There's no reason to act like this. Come on now." You would have gotten the message that anxiety is bad and—what's worse—that if you feel it, there must be something wrong with you. In the future if you feel anxious, your control switch will turn on because you have been conditioned to see anxiety as bad. You will start to fear yourself because you'll feel like something is

wrong with you for feeling anxiety, and therefore you will feel anxious about feeling anxious. This is the way panic disorders develop.

The way to know that your emotional control switch has turned on is that you will start to feel bad about feeling bad or feel bad about feeling good. For example, you'll feel angry about feeling depressed, or anxious about feeling anxious, or guilty for feeling happy, or afraid about feeling anger, or sad about feeling depressed. This is sometimes called a *secondary emotion*. You will also immediately revert to all the emotional control strategies that are linked to that control switch, such as drinking alcohol, reading a book, exercising, eating, shooting up heroin, distracting yourself, obsessively writing affirmations, positively focusing, or arguing with and contradicting your negative thoughts—all of which are attempts to make the emotion go away because you have judged it as bad.

This is the reason that you can't use positive focus to get rid of negative emotions. Whatever we resist persists. This resistance of the emotion is, in fact, what causes a downward spiral. Our emotions work like quicksand, where if we struggle against them, we end up drowning. If you continue to find that nothing ever works to help you feel better no matter how hard you try, it is because you are approaching your life from that very angle—the angle that you must feel better because *whatever you are feeling is not OK*. You are approaching the way you feel from the angle of *this is bad and so it has to change*. You have begun to think thoughts like *What have I done to deserve this?* or *What is wrong with me?* or *I wish I didn't feel like this* or *I can't handle this* or *Why am I like this?* or the very worst: *I shouldn't feel like this*. Sometimes people will try the Completion Process and report that it doesn't work to help them feel better. They struggle with the process, and it doesn't bring about resolution. The reason for this is that they are too resistant to their emotions, and they cannot access the emotion that lies beneath their secondary emotion.

Earlier in the book, we discussed cover emotions. I explained that cover emotions function exactly like ice on the surface of a deep lake. In the same way that the ice covers the water, a cover emotion exists to cover another emotion below it. Ice on a lake prevents you from falling through and into the water, and in the same way, the

cover emotion prevents you from sinking into and feeling the emotion that it is designed to cover. Cover emotions exist to keep us out of lower vibrational states. They are natural defense mechanisms within the emotional body. Obviously, if we subconsciously or consciously see an emotion as bad, we will want to keep out of it. For this reason, a secondary emotion (an emotion about feeling an emotion) works just like a cover emotion does. Sometimes, when we are completely present with a cover emotion, we drop into the even-deeper level of emotion it covers. It's a bit like an emotional version of falling through the ice into the deep water below. However, this doesn't always work. We spend what seems like an eternity grappling with the secondary emotion to no avail. When this is the case, the secondary emotion itself is the one to which we need to apply the entire Completion Process. Instead of asking ourselves, "When was the first time I felt this way?," we need to ask ourselves, "When was the first time I learned it wasn't OK to feel this emotion?"

Sometimes the secondary emotion we feel (the emotion that is the by-product of our resistance to feeling the way we feel) is the reflection of trauma that needs to be resolved, the trauma that was experienced when we learned it wasn't OK to feel a certain emotion. If we apply the Completion Process to this emotion, we can resolve our resistance to the emotion so that we can actually succeed with the Completion Process relative to our deeper emotional trauma.

I met with a client named Anne, who was struggling on a daily basis with the Completion Process. According to Anne, she would sit with an emotion for hours and see no improvement. When I walked her through the process, we discovered that the reason it wasn't working for her was that the minute she would feel an emotion, such as anger, her emotional control switch would come on and she would feel intense anxiety about feeling the emotion. That anxiety would never allow her to drop down into the feeling. Instead of trying to get past that anxiety, we simply applied the Completion Process to that anxiety about feeling anger.

The memory that came up for resolution was from when she was a toddler and angry at her sister. She pushed her sister away as a result of that anger. Her mother shamed her and put her in a time-out. At that age, this experience was traumatic enough that she decided anger was not OK. The feeling of anger in her adult life

essentially became the trigger for this traumatic memory. As a result of feeling anger, she would re-live the anxiety of being shamed and separated from her family as punishment. At first, her adult self could not tell her child self that feeling anger was OK. She had to bring the image of me into the memory with her and see me telling both her adult self and her child self that it was OK to be angry. She had me enable her inner child in this memory to smash plates and scream, and she had me lecture her mother about dealing with her children's anger.

Essentially, by dealing with that memory, we made it OK for her to feel anger. What Anne found was that after resolving that trauma about feeling anger, she could now drop into her anger when she felt it in her adult life, and create resolution for the trauma linked to it. The Completion Process began to work for her. What's more, she realized that the reason nothing ever worked to make her feel better was that she was not OK with feeling anything she deemed negative. Her reason for doing various kinds of self-healing processes—including the Completion Process—was to try to control the way she felt. She realized that her emotions were not inherently good or bad. Those were judgments about the emotions. She noticed that like the tides, they came and went in response to things she thought or said or did or encountered in the world. Her emotions were simply part of her. She realized that the reason her efforts to feel better didn't work was that doing something with the intention to escape from feeling because you see feeling as bad is a self-hating mission.

Painful emotions become chronic (as in nothing you do ever works to make you feel better) only if your emotional control switch is flipped on and you resist the emotion you feel. This is the difference between temporary discomfort and long-term suffering. That being said, even though you, like me, have adopted the Completion Process as a way to feel better, it is my hope that your own process brings you to the point where feeling better is no longer your goal. It is my hope that your new goal becomes to develop a beautifully rich and positive relationship with feeling itself, no matter what emotion it is that you happen to be feeling.



RECONCILIATION



LIFE-CHANGING IMPACT OF THE COMPLETION PROCESS

The people who work for me and with me know that helping individuals with PTSD is a particular passion of mine. So it came as no surprise when, in 2014, my assistant burst into the room to tell me about a veteran in England who had been working with the Completion Process in his own life. He had discovered so much success by using it himself that he had contacted our offices to ask for my permission to use the process with other veterans who were returning from war with PTSD.

This was the first time I was made aware of Sgt. Steve Clews. I contacted him to tell him that he not only had my blessing but he also had my full support. During the months that followed, Steve and I consulted on occasion about the Completion Process, and he shared with me (on a confidential basis) some of the tremendous successes that particular individuals he was working with were experiencing. It was then that his passion to use the process with other war veterans turned into a purpose, and I am pleased to share that he is now on a mission to expand this work even further.

MEETING A MAN OF ACTION

I had the pleasure of meeting Steve and his family in person for the first time

in London in August 2015. It felt like a dream come true for me to meet this man, who had independently begun working toward my original vision and was turning it into a reality. You may have noticed in your own life that whenever you develop a strong connection to someone before you see him or her, finally meeting him or her is a very emotional experience. As Steve and I sat down to tea, he leaned his cane against the wall, and when we smiled at one another, our smiles themselves said a thousand words.

At that moment, I simultaneously felt both joy and sadness. Those of us who have been touched at our core by life-altering trauma carry a particular kind of grief that is like a stain. We come to believe that this stain is what makes us unlovable and ruined. We spend years trying to rub this stain out, and we recognize it instantly in others. But this stain, like a stain added to a pot before it is fired, is in fact part of our matured beauty. It adds a certain depth to the feel of us.

Sitting in front of Steve that day in August, I saw his stain. I could feel that he recognized my stain as well. And the relief that came as a result of that mirrored recognition was palpable. It brought us each the silent gift of both understanding and loyal camaraderie. Like me, he and his family have been called to do this healing work within the world, and millions of lives stand to benefit by it. Steve's story is a constant reminder to me that when we experience painful things, we rarely know why. We don't see how it fits into the bigger picture of life, and so we feel victimized by life itself. But if we have the patience to just put one foot in front of the other in the direction of healing, the "why" eventually reveals itself to us, and we suddenly see the bigger picture. So often, it is beautiful, and I can tell you it was that day.

This chapter is about Steve's own story and other stories gathered from courageous people who have experienced the Completion Process firsthand. Like Steve, some of them have gone on to become facilitators, and others are enjoying aspects of renewed well-being and a zest for life that they never thought they would experience again.

Sgt. Steve Clews has been quite public with his own story and has given me permission to use his name. Others who sent in personal stories have given similar permission, but most of them live more private lives, and in order to protect them and their families, I have chosen to change most of their real names and any identifying details for this book. The quotations, however, are in their own words, which I feel are helpful for understanding why people choose to practice the Completion Process in their lives. You can see the interesting and surprising ways it has helped them and others.

FROM THE FRONT LINES

Steve Clews served as a sergeant in the Royal Armoured Corps Cavalry for the British armed forces for 12 years with a number of active tours in both well-known and remote theaters of operation. He also served as part of a specialized training unit that carried out duties of close protection. He knew as a young child that he wanted to be a soldier, and he joined the Army Cadet Force at age 12. As soon as he left school, he joined the British Army, enjoying the disciplined training and passing through basic training. I am eternally grateful to him and the others for sharing their personal experiences.

During 12 years of active military duty, Steve experienced many traumatic events. He admits that in the line of duty, he had to take lives. Due to the situations he was placed in and the conditions at the time, Steve had no doubt in his mind that there was no alternative. He came very close to losing his own life, to the point where even his clothes and armor were damaged by shrapnel or bullets. He even witnessed close friends and colleagues killed, maimed, and seriously injured.

After leaving the Army, he took resettlement retraining in IT, and it was a good match for him. Within a year, he became a MCSE (Microsoft Certified System Engineer) and was employed as a systems administrator for a large company. But something was not right, and he just could not settle.

“There was a part of me missing. Also at the time I was in a terrible relationship and I could not settle into a family life,” Steve recalls. “I had an aggression inside of me that manifested as if I had a double personality. When triggered, this cold, calculating and very dangerous person would just step in and take over. It was as if the real Steve (me), who was a rational and logical thinker with good social morals and etiquette, was completely taken over. I felt silenced or overridden completely by this other person who was so violent.”

Each time this aspect of his personality took over, it stole more and more of Steve’s self-worth and self-control. He says it got to the stage where just standing talking to someone, no matter what the situation, he could feel a rage growing inside him. He would suddenly feel adrenaline surging through his body, first feeling his jaw clench, then his shoulders tense, ready to strike out.

“I felt like I was going to seriously hurt them. I realized that things were wrong, this was not the real me,” Steve explains. “So I started to withdraw from social events and society to avoid any triggers and to not expose myself to an environment that could set this off.” He left his job and the relationship he was in, and he contacted some guys he knew who were working the circuit in the Arab states on close protection work (bodyguards). He knew this work would

put him back in some extremely hostile and dangerous locations, but he hoped it would give him some sense of control again.

TRYING TO ADJUST TO A “NORMAL” LIFE

This line of work was all right for a while, but after a few years, Steve wanted to return to the UK and settle down and finally make a home.

However, within a few months, he found himself struggling yet again with his hypervigilant personality and overwhelming urges toward aggression and violence. He moved from one job to another and kept relocating, but still he was drawn to more volatile types of work, such as being a doorman at night and a store detective by day. Despite his best efforts, he felt his violent side rise up to the point of almost killing someone, and it freaked him out.

Even though he tried to keep himself very healthy and even had his own gym, he found that his overall health deteriorated, bringing with it a lot of pain, bowel problems, and sleep issues. He also suffered with type 2 diabetes and particularly nasty anxiety attacks. Then around April 2013, he suddenly and dramatically faced an even more serious health challenge. He suffered a minor stroke, followed by another stroke a few weeks later.

But it was not just his health that Steve was worried about. He had lost his eight-year-old son about three years earlier to a brain tumor. At the funeral, Steve found that he could not show emotion or tears. Then over the next two years, both of Steve's parents died suddenly, and the same thing happened: Steve could not allow himself to grieve or show emotion.

He knew it wasn't healthy to keep so much grief and anger trapped inside, but he just couldn't express his emotions. After the strokes, he felt even worse because he could no longer do the physical things he had been doing, and his health spiraled even further downward. During the next few months, he developed fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, and his diabetes suddenly required huge amounts of insulin to control.

It was then that the underlying mental issues and PTSD really struck him and struck him hard. "I was diagnosed with severe anxiety and severe clinical depression," Steve recalls. "I started to suffer with dissociation seizures on a frequent basis which are like a fit of seizure but without the shaking. Afterwards you don't even know if you remained conscious or not."

In terms of physical medical problems, he realizes now that he was suffering from Gulf War syndrome. In the UK, the Ministry of Defense still doesn't officially acknowledge this syndrome, even though Steve has personally met

many veterans who suffer from it.

SEEKING SOME KIND OF SOLUTION

By this time, Steve says that his mental health was causing serious problems, and he still couldn't control his temper. The slightest thing would trigger him into rage, and he often had no idea or conscious awareness of what the trigger was. Like many people in this situation, Steve tried various antidepressants and he was referred to counseling and CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy). Steve admits it did not go well and he stopped going after just a few sessions. He felt like the counselors were patronizing him, pretending to understand him, and those professionals actually became triggers. It was a dark time, and Steve says, "I felt like kicking the seven bells of dirt out of them."

Eventually Steve became a prisoner in his own home, avoiding even looking out the front windows in fear of triggers. This lasted just over a year, during which he never went out and he had to be personally supervised by his wife or a family member. He lost all self-worth and self-control and didn't even trust himself.

One day he decided that there was only one way out, which was to commit suicide. He made several attempts, all of which failed. His lowest point came next. "On my final attempt, as I started to push a carving knife into my artery in my neck, I just glanced down and my beloved dog was looking up at me and I froze on the spot," he recalls with emotion. "I failed again because of the look on my dog's face. Now I didn't even have the control to end my own life."

As a last act of desperation, he sat down at his laptop and typed in "dealing with anxiety." Many typical websites popped up, but then he noticed one of my sites. It had a picture of a YouTube channel, and the topic I was speaking about dealt with the emotional body.

Steve had no patience left to read anything, but since this was a video, he clicked on it and listened to me explain how the emotions work and how we deal with them mostly in the wrong way. Steve says he could hardly believe it. "It was as if lights in my brain were switching on," he explains. "She talked at a level I could connect with and understand and relate to. It was as if someone had come along and placed a jet wash in my head and cleared out all the garbage and allowed me to actually get an angle and understanding of what was really going on." For the rest of that week, he says he was glued to YouTube, watching video after video. He recalls feeling such a sense of relief that he was finally starting to recover.

FEELING COMPLETE AT LONG LAST

Steve is clear about why this approach to healing clicked for him. “For me the biggest breakthrough to recovery and healing was learning about how emotions work and learning about acceptance. For as long as I can remember in my adult life, I had been suppressing emotions. This is something that soldiers do as part of life and they are not often even aware that they are doing it. As a soldier, you cannot show any emotion except one and that is pure aggression in the face of adversity. It worked very well while serving and I will say it saved my life on a lot of occasions, but the problem is when I left the Army, I found this simply does not fit in with a civilian lifestyle.”

When he heard me explain online that emotions are messages that are delivered to make us aware of something, it finally made sense to him. The more he ignored those messages in his life and suppressed them over the years, the louder they shouted at him. Sure enough, those messages found other ways of making him listen, manifesting in other forms such as pain, stress, skin rashes, stomach disorders, and so on.

Steve suddenly realized that he couldn’t outrun or keep hiding from these messages. He couldn’t fight them because they were in his own head and in his own mind. What would happen, he wondered, if he opened up and allowed them in? *What if he truly listened to them?*

“At first I was afraid of doing this but what had I got to lose?” he recalls thinking. “Sure enough, it wasn’t long until something outside triggered me. I sat down in a chair and felt the aggression; I really went into myself and really felt it. I allowed every physical feeling come through and I identified with it. I allowed the feeling to rise up and I felt as if I was dropping down a funnel into it.”

Then the exact opposite of what he expected to happen happened. He says it was like he had passed through a tunnel and came out the other side, but that other side was calm and clear. The physical turmoil and emotional feelings passed, and he felt lighter, as if coming up for air after holding your breath underwater.

“For the first time in as long as I can remember, I felt in connection with my body and mind and I was actually in control,” he says. “I could not believe at first how easy this had been after years of suppression tactics or distraction. All this time, all I had to do was actually listen and accept what my emotions were trying to say to me. Within a few days of the initial process, my world changed completely. Life was in front of me and now I could take it on with open arms. I felt strong and my energy levels were rising rapidly.”

Steve realized that if this had worked for him, then he could use it to help others. He was one of the first people to become a CPCP (Completion Process Certified Practitioner). You can find more details about this certification in Appendix B. As Steve says, “I started to deliver the Completion Process to veterans who were in crisis, and every veteran I have worked with has found it to be the answer they needed. I watch as the whole aura of the person changes, their posture suddenly changes, and their facial expression especially around the eyebrows suddenly relaxes, fists unclench. As I bring them out again when they are ready, they look at me with relief. I ask them not to talk for a few minutes and just absorb how they feel because I know firsthand it can be hard to put into words. I have been successfully delivering the Completion Process for a year now and I firmly believe it’s time to expand this process so that anyone can get the relief they so desperately need and change their lives for good.”

One of the reasons the Completion Process works for Steve and his fellow veterans is that it allows us to become less reactive, and the post-traumatic stress response goes away. Even though you may not have faced war, you have quite likely faced trauma, and this process can benefit you in the same way.

As you practice the process, you will find that triggers will no longer plague you. Once you begin to heal the wounds buried in your subconscious mind, you become free of sore spots. As a result, the people you come in contact with won’t trigger you in the ways they once did. What a feeling of freedom to realize that something that would have infuriated you before, no longer bothers you! You can begin to respond in thoughtful ways to difficult situations in your life, instead of merely reacting to them unconsciously; as a result, you will experience much less conflict in your life.

WHEN YOU STARE AT DEATH AND WIN THE FIGHT

While I have been working as a healer for many years, it is still interesting to me the number of ways that trauma can affect people physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, sometimes affecting every aspect of themselves and their lives. Very often, the person can’t figure out what is going on, and their life just continues to spiral out of control. Jonathan was a young man who faced serious and yet rather mysterious symptoms, which sent him looking for answers.

Jonathan says he started getting fevers and losing a dramatic amount of weight

in April 2013. At first he thought he had picked up a persistent flu. He worked in a busy retail store during the day, and being sick was really hard because he had to stand all day. Then he started to get nosebleeds, and some days his whole body ached. He finally decided to go to the doctor.

“They ran tests on me for weeks and eventually called me into the private office and gave me the worst news of my life,” he recalls. “I was diagnosed with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia. That day, my whole life fell apart. I was facing the real possibility of dying and dying young. I immediately consented to chemo treatments and radiation therapy. I had to quit my job. There is no describing the emotional and physical pain of the experience.”

Jonathan says he slipped into a deep depression, and to make matters worse, the medical treatments didn’t work. His disease progressed and turned into Richter’s syndrome, and at that point, he was convinced he was going to die. Desperate to find a solution, he started to look into alternative treatments for cancer. Then in the fall of that same year, he was listening to a morning radio show in his car about natural health. I was giving an interview and talking about how I sometimes work one-on-one with terminally ill clients.

Jonathan pulled over to the side of the road and contacted my office to schedule an appointment. When he showed up for the appointment, he fully expected to be a passive participant in the process of healing, as had been the case with the doctors he had been seeing. He was surprised when I explained my approach, that I wasn’t a doctor, and that I believed that the precondition of his illness was not physical but emotional.

He admits that what I said sounded farfetched and even radical to him at the time, but being desperate, he was willing to try anything.

“So once I met with Teal, I began using the Completion Process in my own life every day. When I started trying it, my mind would hijack me out of the experience,” he describes. “But after a week, I woke up with the awareness that I was feeling crushing emotional pain. It felt like my heart was broken. I later realized this feeling was grief. From what I had learned from Teal, I was able to be completely present with this feeling. And for the first time in years, I started to cry. In fact I sobbed for over an hour.”

Jonathan says he suddenly understood that for years he had been carrying around a feeling from childhood that he was being attacked from all angles of his life. He felt like there was no way out and that he had no support from anyone or any way to handle the obstacles in his life. He also had another common feeling that I often hear about from clients. He described it this way: “I had never actually felt safe in my life. The places I should have found safety, such as my home, were places of hostility, blame, and abuse. I always felt invaded by the

harshness of the world itself. I had to grow up too quickly with no support in this hostile world.”

Once Jonathan learned how to really *be* with his old feelings, he was able to heal the buried wounds and the grief within himself. It was not long before he started feeling a sense of relief and resolve having faced these old emotions. “I was able to provide my inner child and my heart with the things I did not get as a child, and as a result, the world started to feel safer,” Jonathan recalls. “I even found a best friend during the process who moved into an apartment with me and some days I even enjoyed my life. I actually forgot about dying for an hour at a time. I was feeling complete, so I figured that if it was my time to die, I was prepared to trust that I could face that.”

Jonathan could have concluded his comments there, but he continued; “Here’s the best part: I went in to the doctors’ after months of doing the process and they told me that my cancer was in remission. I feel that it wasn’t the chemo that did it, nor the radiation or any other doctor or person who cured me. *It was me that cured myself*. I truly believe that I cured myself by actually facing the root of the pain I had been carrying for years and by waking up both spiritually and emotionally. My cancer has been in complete remission for just over a year now. This has not been an easy process but I have come to realize that true healing is rarely an easy process.”

EXPERIENCING THE FREEDOM OF PEACE

I am sharing these stories to give you an appreciation of what you can gain by making the Completion Process part of your life. One of the first things you may notice is the potential for experiencing peace. Like forgiveness, peace cannot be forced. You cannot just decide to be peaceful because it isn’t something that you do, but rather it’s something that *organically occurs within you* in response to your healing.

You might not be aware of it, but peace is not a purely positive state. It’s a state that transcends opposites; peace actually transcends both the positive and the negative. Many people look at an enlightened person and assume that the enlightened person feels positive emotions all the time and that is why he or she behaves that way. The truth is that an enlightened person has made a practice of releasing all resistance from his or her being. It’s not that they never experience conflict or pain. It’s that they are willing to be open to experiencing conflict and pain.

Once you become willing to feel, you no longer resist conflict or pain, and

you'll no longer fear the future. You'll become so open to experiencing all things in life that you won't resist any experiences; in the absence of resistance, *you will find peace*. In this way, true and lasting peace isn't the result of no longer experiencing conflict. It's the result of embracing all experiences, whether they involve conflict or not. Peace works on the assumption that there is value to negative experiences and also value to positive experiences, and that these two states need each other to exist. Peace is a level of freedom that most people never experience in their life, but peace is always available to you.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS IN CAREER AND LIFE

You have now heard two client stories that are dramatic, so you might wonder, *Are they all that way?* What other good things can come out of the Completion Process? Here is a case where Isaac, a man in his early 30s, found that the Completion Process helped him secure financing for a venture after years of having difficulty closing such deals.

In 2013, Isaac was trying hard, but not succeeding, to raise a lot of money for his company. He seemed to have a number of investors interested in his business, all ready to invest, but every time at the last minute, they'd change their minds, and he wouldn't get the funding. He wondered if he was cursed or something, so he reached out to me to consult about my business and how he could overcome the blocks he was feeling.

It was during these consultations that I told Isaac about the Completion Process, and he started to use it on himself. He soon realized that he struggled with a number of patterns around money, and he began to understand the root of this issue. "I was neglected as a child, and as a result, I had the subconscious belief that my needs could not be met by others and that I had to do everything on my own," he describes. "I would attract interest in my company through my passion, expertise, and persistence, but then my emotional wounds from childhood would sabotage all of my fund-raising efforts."

The awareness of this helped him to understand that his most important desire was to be loved and that making lots of money was the main way he was trying to get love. He kept on creating an environment of scarcity at his company, but slowly, he began to see why he did this. "I think I was subconsciously proving to myself that my employees stuck around because they truly loved me," he recalls. "After all, they could not possibly stay because they *liked* the daily struggles we

were under, and since I could only pay them a salary that was under market level, I figured they must be sticking around for one reason: *they loved me.*”

As he continued to use the Completion Process, he learned how to change his thinking and learned how important it is to connect with how he felt. He started to engage in activities that felt good rather than thinking he had to keep struggling all the time. As he put his new realizations to good use, he soon found that he could not only attract amazing opportunities and outcomes into his business life, but he could also seal those deals!

Isaac sums it up in business terms. “Once I broke down the blocks and embraced my emotions, I found a renewed passion in my business, closing \$1.5 million in funding. We are projected to surpass \$7 million in revenue this year.” As I have continued to watch Isaac’s success soar, I am so happy he is finally living his dreams.

FINDING YOUR TRUE PURPOSE

Many good things happened when Isaac embraced the Completion Process, and you can enhance your life in similar ways. Facing and resolving your emotions is an excellent way to help yourself become more authentic. When you do, you will have greater access to what truly brings you joy, and you will discover the gifts that you came to this life to give the world.

This might be a new concept to you, but I believe that our life’s purpose always comes in the form of what we are meant to give this world. As children, we were not disconnected from what brought us joy and what we were good at. We did those things naturally. In that way, we were closer to our purpose as children than we are as adults. By integrating our fractured childhood aspects the way Isaac was finally able to do, we regain access to these natural aspects of ourselves, rediscovering what it is that we want to do with our lives. We find our passion.

You’ll also see that Isaac became even more passionate and creative in his drive to advance his company. He felt renewed energy, which is a normal outcome of the Completion Process. Whenever we re-integrate aspects of ourselves that we have rejected (and therefore suppressed), we begin to feel the urge to create. As we become more authentic, we gain access to the gifts we have come into this life with, and our creativity naturally skyrockets to help us achieve our goals.

LIVING A HIGH-STRESS LIFE WHILE FLYING HIGH

People who have aspects of their work that are completely out of their control are often under intense stress. They have to be ready for anything at a moment's notice. Airline pilots would be an example of a job where you have to account for a wide range of variables, such as weather, unruly passengers, airplane maintenance issues, fluctuating schedules, and the safety of everyone on board, just to name a few.

I worked with a man who had to face all these things on any given workday and still deal with his own personal emotional and physical health. I am amazed by the resilience of such high-stress workers, and I would like to share the story of William, who was able to resolve some long-standing personal challenges through the Completion Process.

William worked as a flight captain for commercial passenger flights for more than 20 years before I met him. He really enjoyed this job because he loved the interconnection between technical things and the human teamwork part of the job. He didn't mind the pace and especially enjoyed the phases of high workload when he had first started.

But his early years in life were not nearly as enjoyable. "During my childhood, I was very lonely and lost," William shared with me. "My parents were extreme Christians, so enjoying life was simply not acceptable. I could not listen to non-Christian music, go dancing, play basketball, or have a girlfriend. Therefore, when I was growing up, my core belief was: if I was happy, God would punish me for that. This left me with a feeling of *being wrong*."

William said that he struggled with this as an adult and participated in 300 hours of psychoanalysis to try to overcome this underlying feeling. He became an avid reader of self-help books on love, relationships, depression, and similar topics, but still he suffered with apathy, extreme shame, perfectionism, suppressed anger, and separateness.

He couldn't seem to break free of any of it and says eventually he became hypercritical of himself 24 hours a day. In essence, he treated himself the same way his parents treated him when he was a child. Despite his outward career success as a pilot, William still kept a complete check on his emotions, controlling them at all times so he would not have to feel them.

Finally things came to a head for him and, like many clients I see, he developed physical symptoms. This is how he describes one of his lowest points: "Following many years of not enjoying life, I got an extreme illness that I almost

died from,” William admits. “When this was combined with separating from my wife, I was left feeling completely hopeless.”

When he found the Completion Process, he remembers being surprised to hear that his thoughts could manifest in his body. He had always thought it was the other way around. But through the Completion Process, he discovered the reason for his apathy, self-hatred, and perfectionism.

“I saw clearly that neither the good nor the bad emotions were allowed in my childhood,” William explains. “My father was quite often in a rage, so I never wanted to be that way. When I began to allow myself to feel and express my emotions for the first time, it was a highly visceral experience. I dove deep into the feelings and faced my deep childhood wounds. A few times it felt like dying. My body was shaking. When I experienced triggers, I fully went into that emotion where I discovered and was unconditionally there for my inner child.”

William says that what helped the most was to change the circumstances within the memory so that it finally felt resolved. He admits that relief wasn’t instantaneous, but it didn’t actually take that long before he started to feel transformed. This is how he describes the process in his own words: “Looking at the deep wounds inside myself did not cause me to feel instantly great. First it forced me to go completely in the direction of surrendering to what is, and that was really hard. But every time I did this process, it felt like the anchor was lifting. It slowly started to change my life.”

Now William says he finally knows how he wants a relationship to feel. “I want it to feel warm and fluffy and that’s what I am going for. Since committing to this process, I have been getting more honest and real, both with myself and with others. I have learned that *I am where I am*, and this comforts me.”

Throughout his life, William thought that he would have to change himself completely to be worthy and to be loved. But now that he has learned to face his emotions rather than bury them, he knows that it’s *the other way around*. Learning to unconditionally love himself just as he is right now is the answer.

“I feel like I have really changed my life from the roots,” William says in conclusion. “I still have more work to do, but my relationships have changed dramatically. The more I love myself, the more I can take in the love of others. I finally understand at a soul level that love is not love when it hurts. More and more, I find peace in myself and do not have to search for it in the outside world.”

WELCOME TO SELF-LOVE AND

COMPASSIONATE UNDERSTANDING

One of the main benefits William received was an increase in his ability to love himself. Feeling a boost in one's level of self-love is a natural result of the Completion Process because the process allows us to reduce our fear. When we are no longer crippled with fear, it doesn't bother us as much when other people express negative opinions about us in our daily lives. We don't feel it so deeply. And instead of succumbing to self-doubt and self-loathing in the face of criticism, we begin to see other people's hurtful actions as an indication of the pain and fear *within themselves*. We also know that we can use their hurtful opinions and actions as an excuse to integrate ourselves further and heal ourselves even more.

Another benefit related to this is the gift of compassionate understanding. The more you practice the Completion Process, the more you will begin to see that all behavior, no matter how malevolent it may seem, is done in an effort to feel better. Once you embrace this reality, you will find that the behavior of the people around you will start to make more sense.

This means that every single act in existence, whether it involves wanting to *kiss* someone or *kill* them is committed for one reason and one reason only: *to feel better*. So in fact, there are no such things as hostile, evil, or malevolent intentions in our universe; all things ultimately boil down to wanting to feel better and thinking that a particular action will make us feel better.

This allows you to more fully understand that during your childhood, you formed an unconscious definition of love by watching and interacting with your primary caregivers. As an adult, you will live your life according to this early definition, regardless of how healthy or unhealthy your unconscious definition of love really is.

So if we were shamed as children, we associate love with the feeling of being shamed. Thus, we seek out partners and friends who will shame us because subconsciously we think that's what love is. We assume love hurts. But the good news is that the Completion Process sheds light and truth on this situation. The process reveals that we have come to this life with particular triggers, which will help us identify and work through our emotional and mental wounds, because those wounds are all that prevent us from becoming the embodiment of unconditional love.

That's why when we do the Completion Process, we begin to uncover this pattern within ourselves and develop the ability to see it in others. The Completion Process forces us to be unconditionally loving to ourselves, and as a result, we develop the capacity to become unconditionally loving toward others.

This produces an incredible ripple effect that radiates far outside of our own circle of influence.

Here's how it works: The Completion Process not only creates peace and compassion within our own minds and hearts, but it also creates peace and compassionate love on an interpersonal, worldwide level. Whatever we do to ourselves affects the collective. When we integrate ourselves, we cause integration within the collective. When we become unconditionally loving, we cause the collective to become unconditionally loving. When we find peace within ourselves, we cause peace within the collective.

In this way, the Completion Process affects anything it comes into contact with. By starting to use it, we set in motion a benevolent shock wave that will forever change the course of our lives as well as the course of the world.

WHEN PARENTING BRINGS UP YOUR OWN ISSUES

As much as we would all like to leave the world a better place, for most of us we are consumed with just balancing our own inner and outer realities on any given day. An example of this that you might relate to is Mysty's story. I remember when I first met her she was a stay-at-home mom of three. She was struggling to figure out how to be a mother because no one had prepared her for such an incredible personal challenge. She loved her children dearly, but she had no idea how much unresolved "stuff" that her children would bring up in her. I enjoyed helping her and watching her confidence as a mother and a woman improve through the work we did together.

When Mysty spoke about her days at home, with all the new responsibilities, I could relate to it myself, and I have since coached many different clients who had similar issues. Here's how Mysty described her reality when we first met: "Some days, I'd find myself becoming so reactive to the littlest things and then I'd spiral into guilt and feel like the worst mom in the world," she admits. "It became obvious to me that if I care for other people every day, I needed my own support and more specifically, I needed some help dealing with my own emotions."

After her children would go to bed at night, Mysty loved to read, so she started learning about emotional healing. She says she found a lot of good techniques, but always had a nagging sense that there was something deeper and that she was just scratching the surface. Then she hit upon something new that

really resonated with her; she found the Completion Process. She says it was one of those things that just found its way to her somehow.

“I attended a seminar about the process, thinking originally that I’d use it just for me,” Mysty recalls. “But when I started using it, I was absolutely floored. I had thought that I was a really ‘together’ person. But once I started doing the process, I realized that I was simply coping with my marriage and with my kids by numbing myself out. In fact, I had started to cope with all my difficult emotions and thoughts by using prescription medication.”

It’s hard for any parent to admit this, but Mysty knew she could not keep using those coping mechanisms. She went on to say how hard it was to come clean, even to herself. “I had never actually faced the trauma in my past,” she shared with me. “Being the wife of a successful husband and the leader of a women’s group in my local church, I was expected to be a role model and set an example in my community. I couldn’t just let myself fall apart. But the Completion Process made me realize how unfulfilled I felt and how insecure I felt as a wife and mother.”

As Mysty gained strength and personal insight, she finally faced head-on how much she hated the role she was playing. One day, she just admitted to herself and to her husband that she had had enough. “I let myself fall apart and it was ultimately the best thing that ever happened to me and my marriage and my family,” Mysty says.

Through the process of facing her inner self, Mysty was able to put her full self back together. She began by modeling her life after her actual desires rather than trying to be everything for everyone else in her life. She was amazed by the effects she began to experience not only inside herself but inside her home. “I started to notice that the emotional health of my children was improving,” she explains. “They acted out less and got along with each other more and they seemed healthier. It was obvious that they were mirroring my emotional state which had greatly improved.”

When she asked me if she could use the process directly with her children, I said yes, and she went on to guide her oldest son through the process. She thought it would be hard to do with the children but, in fact, she found that it was easier. Her son had no trouble at all accessing his emotions and expressing his true needs; he intuitively knew what to do to resolve his emotional pain. He cried to her about how much pressure he felt to get good grades and how he was so sad when her husband had told him that he was disappointed in him a few months earlier.

After the session, Mysty said she noticed there was a renewed brightness in her son’s eyes. “The heaviness in him disappeared overnight,” she says. “I could

see that he felt understood and seen by me and, to my surprise, his food allergies started to go away. Now we use this process all the time now in our house. It has made me a better person, a better mother and a better wife. My family is closer than ever. And most of all, my kids are happy. Because of this process, my kids will not have to drag their emotional baggage with them into their adult lives and to me, that is priceless.”

In addition to healing her family, Mysty was able to overcome the things that were preventing her from progressing in life. In her case, she was able to stop taking prescription drugs to numb her pain, which was a huge step forward. I see this same thing happen with many clients who are finally able to give up destructive habits.

It happens because, once we integrate and become conscious, we have the strength to put an end to negative behaviors—things like procrastination, fighting, lying, using drugs, self-sabotaging, withdrawing, and other destructive behaviors. These are all just coping skills or adaptations we developed as a result of our traumatic experiences. Once we integrate those experiences, there is no longer any use for the adaptation, and so it goes away.

OVERCOMING RITUAL TRAUMA AND INCEST

Anything that causes a person any kind of trauma, at any time in their lives, can get stuck in their body and mind and cause havoc later when a trigger brings up the past in some way. This is particularly true with people who faced ritual abuse in their lives, and I do know this kind of horrific experience firsthand. When I meet people like Angela in the story below, I feel it is an honor to work with them to help them resolve such deep emotional suffering.

I am proud of the work Angela has done to secure her own healing. Here is how she describes it: “My entire life has been a state of empty dissociation. I had no feelings. I was in a permanent state of numbness with only slight variations of discomfort or pain. I tried years of different therapies and I have read countless self-help books. I was in a state of desperation, dying to get past the internal blocks that kept me disconnected from everything in my life including my children.”

Angela found that talk therapy and holistic therapy only seemed to get her so far, but those approaches helped her get started, and she is grateful. Those therapies helped her realize that she was suffering from sexual trauma and deep

emotional wounds, but it didn't help much to get her beyond the realization of unhealthy patterns. But when she tried the Completion Process, it was the first type of therapy that actually got her into her own body to the degree that *she could actually feel*.

The first time she tried it, she started unraveling the trauma that she had locked away through dissociation. She went back into a memory of being one year old, and even then she could see she was a victim of ritual trauma and incest. It's one of the most complex and extreme forms of abuse that someone can suffer.

"Going through the Completion Process has blown my reality to pieces but I would never turn back even if that was an option," Angela explains. "I would take all of the earth-shattering emotional pain I am going through as I work through this, over the hollow numbness that existed before. Anything is better than being that sleepwalker that I was."

Within four months, her efforts at healing took off. She began doing things she never thought she would be capable of doing, such as driving a car by herself. She overcame her agoraphobia and soon was able to leave the house by herself. She found that she could think through and process stressful situations instead of completely avoiding them and relying on others to take care of her as she had in the past.

Angela says that the Completion Process woke her up to a reality that she did not consciously create, but rather one that she just drifted into. "This has forced me into a position where I have to completely change my life and the relationships I had formed, which has not been easy or without heartache," she explains. "I find that I just can't settle for less in my life anymore. The best gift to myself throughout all this is that I now have the ability to be unconditionally present, with myself and with others."

Angela still is afraid sometimes that the amount of emotional pain, hopelessness, and despair she experienced might come up again, but now she says she trusts that she has a tool that will guide her through it to the other side. "I have now felt joy, love, and happiness in a way I never thought was possible for me. Even though that comes with its own set of fears, I can't help but feel eternally grateful for this gift I have been given in my life."

WORKING WITH PRISON INMATES

Another group of people I sincerely wanted to impact, even from the beginning of my career as a healer, are people in the prison system. The

Completion Process is a significant breakthrough practice for many inmates because so many of them suffer with trauma, addictions, depression, or chronically low self-esteem. I have long believed that most prisoners within our justice system are incarcerated because of trauma that they had never been able to resolve from their childhoods.

This next story is from a man named Michael who works with inmates. He provided me with such a thoughtful description of this population that I was happy when he agreed that I could share his words here. Michael has been a volunteer in jails for many years, mostly teaching meditation to the inmates. He finds this to be a very rewarding experience for many reasons. Jail is a sensory-deprived environment that induces self-reflection because there is little distraction. All the basics of life are taken care of, so inmates have very little to do and virtually no control over their daily routines. Michael says that research shows that an inmate makes only 20 decisions a day, compared to the 200 decisions an average person makes.

Prison inmates don't have the luxury to do all the things we take for granted, such as choosing our clothes in the morning, deciding what to eat, when to visit friends and family, or even just going for a walk in the park. Stuck in this kind of limited reality, there is a natural urge for them to learn to be happy independently of their environment, and Michael says that is what meditation offers them, a way to take control of their minds.

While he told me that the inmates reported feeling good and were more hopeful after each group meditation session he facilitated, he still had a nagging feeling that he could be doing more. He wanted to act as a sort of anchor to bring them hope, to help them change their lives and create a better reality for themselves if he possibly could. That's when he came across the work I was doing in helping people to heal past trauma.

About two years ago, he heard about the work and he resonated with my teachings on shadow work in particular. He heard my explanation about healing the emotional body, which is the key component of the Completion Process. Michael first practiced the technique to heal some of his own traumas, and then decided to suggest it to the inmates. For the ones who wanted to participate, Michael started with his regular Buddhist meditation and, once the participants were brought to a higher state of consciousness, he asked if any of them wanted to volunteer to be guided through the Completion Process. It has since become a popular addition to their group sessions.

"Since I first introduced the process, there has not been a single session where there aren't at least two or three inmates who have breakthrough or deep emotional releases," says Michael. "It's astounding to watch these men that

people see as dangerous and violent do inner-child work and cry like small children. A lot of heart connections are created, and often I regret that we are not able to hug each other because it's forbidden to have physical contact with convicts.”

After such cathartic experiences, I have learned that a number of these men have been able to create new lives for themselves without addiction and crime. Michael believes that this therapy is the light that can transform the most isolated and “darkest” parts of our society.

FEELINGS OF CHILDHOOD INNOCENCE RETURN

Imagine the freedom that comes with rediscovering your childhood innocence. Once the inmates that Michael worked with got back in touch with the inner child inside them, they gained the positive aspects of childhood, rekindling an important inner relationship. They could then find themselves able to have fun again, gaining the innocence they had lost touch with. By delving into the subconscious and integrating pain, we will all find that what remains is innocence.

Innocence is a lightness of being. It's a worry-free state. There's purity to this state because there is nothing obscuring our light. Most people associate innocence with ignorance or with weakness, but innocence is neither of those things. When we gain knowledge, we don't have to lose innocence. This only occurs if the knowledge we gain causes us to move into a space of pain or fear. And contrary to popular opinion, there is an immense bravery in innocence.

Innocence is a state of openness. It's a fundamentally unafraid state. Its light is not guarded. It's benevolent and untouchable. We may be able to obscure the light of our innocence to the degree that we have no awareness of it, but the light itself will not go out. The more wisdom you gain, the closer you get to a state of innocence.

We could all benefit from regaining our ability to play. Play is defined as engagement in an activity for enjoyment and recreation, rather than for a serious or practical purpose. This is where we have to stop and think. In the very definition of the word *play*, we find the dysfunction of the society we have co-created.

We have all grown up thinking that play is not connected to purpose. We have been led to believe that there is something more important than happiness itself.

Then we grow up and wonder why we aren't happy without realizing that one reason is because we don't take the straight path to it by prioritizing enjoyment. Rather, we spend our lives beating about the bush, hoping that our happiness will come as the end result of other priorities, like keeping a reliable job or reaching our goals. By partaking in the Completion Process, we begin to prioritize enjoyment and we find that in a state that is less guarded and afraid, we begin to play again.

HOW SOCIAL WORKERS CAN EMPLOY THE COMPLETION PROCESS

So many different populations can benefit from the Completion Process that I feel sometimes that we have only scratched the surface so far. That's why I am thankful to people like Leslie for sharing the process with others through her practice as a licensed clinical social worker.

Leslie has found an effective way to incorporate the Completion Process into her daily practice with clients and agrees that it sets up people to be much more successful in their own healing. "Most people who come to see me as a therapist are not used to honoring their negative emotions," Leslie explains. "So I spend as much time as needed helping them understand their tendency to avoid feelings and to see that avoidance happening in real time. I also interject compassionate responses to their emotions to show them how different it feels to have their emotions validated." Leslie reports that the biggest obstacle to clients fully doing the Completion Process is that they have an unconscious fear of their own feelings. She says that her clients have often already spent years mentally working on their life issues, so it's not easy to get them to accept and understand that there is *yet another* critical step they need to make.

In her professional opinion, the two most important aspects of the Completion Process are accepting the importance of feelings and emotions, and having a willingness to understand the existence of the inner child, even if seen as "only a mental construct." Once clients can make the leap to understanding that the inner child exists, she sees a "knowing" in their physical expression. It's a recognition of themselves, which is like a big relief, as if they are finally saying: "I'm home."

She particularly appreciates how the details in the first step are designed to create a personalized, safe place through guided meditation. The creation of the Safe Haven is done so thoroughly that it lets her clients truly create only what

their mind knows is satisfying. She believes that this individualized creation gives the Completion Process a unique healing foundation.

Leslie also says she likes that the Completion Process is a linear and limited process, with 18 clearly defined steps. “The steps give people a safe structure with which to allow the feelings that have never been safe to express before,” Leslie adds. “Some of my clients dive right into the process and get to feel, possibly for the first time in a while, an ‘all-right-ness’ because their primary support or adult self is able to mentally construct unconditional loving kindness and give it to their hurt inner child.”

STOPPING THE BATTLE WITH FOOD AND WEIGHT

I find the following personal story is also quite captivating because it deals with a few common conditions in our world today: *obesity*, *eating disorders*, and *depression*. I have worked with a number of people to help them overcome their weight issues, but this story from Zach Moyer is one that I will never forget. He is a public figure and his transformative story is well known, so he is happy to have me use his real name.

Zach works as a holistic health consultant, writer, food justice advocate, and speaker. When you follow his journey, you’ll see he’s come a long way. He tells his story better than I ever could, so here goes. “In 2011, I was obese, self-medicated, depressed, and chronically ill. Due to chronic throat infections and strong psychiatric medications, I was practically bedridden for months because I had given up on life. Since childhood, I had always struggled with consistent weight gain and it made me feel completely out of control. When I got older, those same feelings of being out of control manifested in my life as Binge Eating Disorder.

“As my health declined and my mental health suffered, one fateful night I contemplated whether I would live or die. In that moment, I felt like I had a choice. I could either take the entire bottle of pills I was prescribed and go to sleep; or I could try to keep going. Thinking of my family and friends and not wanting them to deal with my early departure, I chose to live.

“Over the years, in an attempt to figure it all out, I sought many opinions. Each psychiatrist I saw explained to me that I had a chemical imbalance in my brain and the only solution was to shoot arrows in the dark at the problem in the form of various drugs, until one of those arrows hit the target. I was put on

unfathomable doses of various medications and was told to accept that this would be for the rest of my life. My conventional therapist took a different approach and seemed to have one clear objective: *to fix me*. My depression was treated as something that I had to fight and resist. My wounded ego told me that my only salvation was to settle down and get myself together. Yet, my spirit was relentlessly determined to not settle or accept feeling the way I did on a permanent basis.

“But before I knew it, the cocktail of medications I was on was so strong that I struggled to wake up in the morning and stay awake during the day. Yet I was still dangerously overweight, sick and depressed. Every night, I would make a trip to the grocery store in an attempt to comfort myself. I stocked up on frozen pizza, tortilla chips, shredded cheese by the bag, guacamole, and frozen French fries to be topped off by two liters of diet soda and a pint of ice cream. In a manic episode, I would race home from the store each night to prepare my binge. Binging was perhaps the most pleasurable thing I had ever done in my life. In my little private studio apartment, I could hide from the world with the comforts of my food and escape from life, responsibility, and rejection.

“One night, while I was lying in bed binging on ice-cream sandwiches, all of a sudden, my heart began palpitating and I felt a painful, sharp sensation in my chest. In total shock and fear, I put the sandwich down. Two thoughts crossed my mind in that moment. The first one was: ‘I am literally giving myself a heart attack. If this kills me, I am going to die alone in my disgusting studio apartment. I will not be found for days, and when I am, they will discover me in my own filth, surrounded by food.’ The second thought came to me in the form of two powerful questions: *‘Is this healthy behavior? Do healthy people eat like I do?’* The answer was a loud and resounding, ‘No.’

“From that moment on, I had a new awareness and then the missing solution came to me through one of Teal Swan’s YouTube Videos in her series, *Ask Teal*. When I heard her explain that it is our childhood trauma that roots us in the dysfunctional, debilitating pain we feel in adulthood, I finally realized that nothing is *wrong with me*. Instead, a lot of bad things have *happened to me*.

“This catapulted my healing journey. Once I began the process of facing my emotions and began feeling more complete, I weaned myself off of years’ worth of medication and put an end to my dangerous food binges. My depressive tendencies vanished and I was inspired to adopt a holistic, healthy lifestyle. I even began a productive, healing, and restorative dialogue with my parents about my childhood.

“In return, I lost one hundred and ten pounds, cured my hypertension, cured my gastric-esophageal reflux disease, and brought my cholesterol down to

normal. I believe that going through the Completion Process was what ultimately helped me break free from the chains of medications, substances, and binge eating disorder.

“I now feel more empathetic and patient with myself in the context of my own weight management. After living and working with this process for myself, I chose to become certified to facilitate the Completion Process for others. I enjoy helping people who wish to better manage their weight issues. Instead of giving them a diet and exercise plan, I work with them to uncover their triggers, memories, and emotions. Time and time again, I see that this healing work lifts the anchors that keep them stagnating in dysfunction. We can all learn that it is safe to feel, safe to remember, and most important, safe to be who we truly are.”

RETURNING TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS

This story from Zach’s life illustrates that physical ailments we suffer with, that are caused by emotional and mental wounds of the past, can indeed be healed. Even if you have been struggling with a chronic illness or disease for years, it can clear up rather quickly once you start making choices for yourself that are in alignment with health.

Don’t be surprised, then, if you find that your diet naturally and effortlessly gravitates toward foods that are good for you. You might find that you effortlessly gravitate toward activities and people that are good for you. Eventually, you’ll find that you are living a much healthier lifestyle and you didn’t have to struggle to get there.

Quite likely you’ll also find that you have more energy when the Completion Process becomes part of your life. That happened for Zach, and it can happen for you. The reason is that our fractured childhood selves are like lost streams of energy that are now re-integrated into our body. Our whole consciousness is in fact a huge stream of energy, so the more we integrate our fractured selves, the more energy of consciousness we have in the *now*.

Zach was also able to reconnect with other people and open up to a friend, who later became his roommate. This is because when we are fully integrated and develop the capacity for unconditional, focused presence and unconditional love, we are like magnets that are irresistible to people. People begin to gravitate toward us, and we become less lonely. Being around us feels good, and we begin to influence others to heal, just by being near them. Another aspect to this is that we become intensely attractive to other people because we represent what their own being is craving to become.

BECOMING EMPOWERED TO LIVE A FULL LIFE

Like Zach and most of my clients, Maggie is also someone who longed to feel some semblance of “normal.” Life just isn’t easy for people like Maggie, who had to work so hard to overcome sexual abuse from her past and somehow put her life back together. In Maggie’s case, she was confused about what actually *happened* to her as a child that had left her still traumatized years later; she wasn’t even completely sure whether her abuse had actually happened or if maybe she had somehow made it up. Her story is so much like many women in this world that I think it’s valuable to share what she went through as she found healing and found a way to help heal others.

The trauma Maggie was seeking to overcome was a memory of sexual abuse. While she wasn’t certain about it, somewhere deep inside she knew that she could not have generated such a specific memory of an actual person in only her imagination. By the time I met her, she had held on to this particular trauma for about 33 years of her life. The memory tormented her because it made her doubt and question her own memory, her psyche, and her own human nature.

“When this trigger would become activated, I would go into fight-or-flight mode with whatever people were around me, and no one was exempt, not customer service folks or even police officers or colleagues,” Maggie recalls. “As you can well imagine, this led to many situations in my life that were less than ideal. I was unaware of the very real connection between that early trauma and my sometimes ‘crazy’ responses to situations in my daily life that caused me to feel unsafe. This trauma also caused many problems in my close relationships with family and friends and it even ended relationships for me at different times.”

Maggie saw three different therapists on and off for more than 13 years. She didn’t like the way her therapists seemed to pretend they were not human beings with authentic feelings. They were always guarded, and they never expressed any emotional reaction to the things she shared. Maggie says she hated the way she could see them mentally trying to figure out the best thing to say rather than just validating what she was feeling.

“For me personally then, the Completion Process was everything that traditional counseling never had been and everything I desperately needed,” Maggie explains. “Finally I was being given the ability and opportunity to create a Safe Haven in my mind, even before having to discuss painful emotions. Having Teal’s gentle presence guiding me through those feelings was like being

flown through the air to safety by Superman: it was terrifying because I could fall and 'die,' but also safe and reassuring because she was there."

One moment that stands out in Maggie's memory was the time when I suggested that she walk right up and knock out her abuser (within the imaginative, meditative process). Maggie says that really helped empower her during that very critical part. She also says that she appreciated how the entire process moved at her own pace. Maggie says she felt really raw during the process, but also more validated than ever before in her entire life.

"The first time I went through the process, I felt many things such as scared, sad, embarrassed, shaky, and hopeless," Maggie recalls. "Then these shifted into feelings of being empowered, supported, validated, safe, and calm. Prior to this point, I found it really difficult to genuinely be present with someone else's emotions. I was unable to connect with people on a deep emotional level. Now I am much more capable of sitting with any level of deep emotional pain and I know that this is a direct result of *sitting with my own pain*."

Maggie has since become a Completion Process Certified Practitioner and says that she continues to be humbled and amazed at the level of healing that can occur, often in just one session. "I have had the opportunity and pleasure of helping a great many people to integrate traumas that happened to them at whatever age they might have been, right from time spent in the womb to eight years old and beyond. I am surprised at my own capacity to be present with the pain of others as they share memories of extreme physical or emotional abuse and violence."

INTEGRATION IMPROVES ALL YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships naturally become healthier when you begin to heal because you learn how to be loving and interdependent rather than codependent. Before we integrate ourselves, we desperately try to get our unconscious needs met, and so we enter into relationships because we are trying to fill the hole left behind by our suppressed self. We are in relationships for reasons other than love, but we don't realize it. Once we begin to re-integrate ourselves, the holes within our being begin to fill in. We start to become whole, and therefore, we start to enter into relationships through conscious choice instead of subconscious choice. Another way of saying this is that we form relationships for love instead of to meet our subconscious needs.

We also become capable of giving love unconditionally, so as a result, conflict leaves our relationships. We become capable of giving and receiving love, and because we have become more conscious of ourselves, we make *conscious* decisions in relationships. Our partners stop triggering us as drastically as they once did, and we are less reactive. We may even begin to use conflict in the relationship as a healthy excuse to heal together rather than a reason to blame the other person.

THE PRACTICE OF PUTTING YOURSELF BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

At times, the suffering we experience here on earth seems unbearable. But there is an upside to suffering. The upside (and therefore purpose) of suffering is that suffering cuts us off from our true selves and from our joy to such a degree that we cannot take it any longer. It brings us to the crossroads where we have nothing more to lose, so we begin to do things drastically different.

You can only suffer so much before the only thing left to do is to stop running from what scares you, no matter what the cost. By deciding this, you set yourself free. You realize that the only answer is to turn around and walk toward your aversion instead. You learn the art of *allowing*. Instead of feeling better, your aim is to get better at feeling; as a result, you become intensely present. The unconscious within you becomes conscious. Craving becomes pure desire. The shadow within you is no longer separated from the light of your own consciousness. You begin to integrate, and as a result, you start to experience yourself as “whole.” This is when you catch a glimpse of peace for the very first time.

From this day on, you will see each moment of your life as a new beginning. Each moment is an opportunity to begin anew. And so each day, you will seize that opportunity. With clear eyes, you will see that life is not the past and life is not the future. Life is now. All that you *are* has culminated in the now, and all that *will be* is manifesting in the now.

The objective reality of eternalness, which exists far beyond the confines of the subjective truth of time, contains a glimpse of an axiom. The axiom is this: Because time does not exist, it is your choice what you become in each moment. You cannot become more or less of what you already and always are.

The common thread that weaves its way through all the varied experiences that people have with the Completion Process is the feeling of being “put back

together” or “becoming whole.” But the truth is, you were never broken. You were never less than complete. Inevitably when you strive to become “complete”—by committing to the process of putting yourself back together again—you will one day arrive at the realization that you were, are, and will always be *whole and complete* exactly as you are in your perfect state of continual evolution.

AFTERWORD

There is an inextricable link between suffering and transformation, so I am thankful for all the ways that I have suffered in my life. Some days I consider them a curse. But other days, I see them in a different light. My suffering catapulted me, as pain so often does, into a space where I had to ask the big questions about life. I had to become aware to survive it all. And I eventually found answers to the questions I had asked. My heart was blown open to reveal an understanding of this Universe. It was blown open to compassion. It was blown open to forgiveness. Suffering gifted me with an entirely new perspective.

The Completion Process, which has ultimately put me back together again and which is now helping to put so many other people back together again, would not have been possible without my pain. So I honor my suffering as my single greatest teacher in this life. Though it has been an acutely painful apprenticeship, it's one that I don't regret.

When we look at something across the world that causes suffering or when we look at something in someone else's life that causes them to suffer, we feel powerless. If we are empathetic, we want desperately to do something to improve the situation. But we don't know how. This is even truer when the suffering is caused by a large conflict, such as a war. We get to a point where we feel utterly powerless to all the suffering in the world. What are we going to do? Are we going to get on a plane, fly to the country where the war is taking place, get off the plane, walk into one of these killing zones, and try to talk terrorists or soldiers into stopping the bloodshed? Some of us might be inspired to do that, but for most of us, we know the answer to that question is no. As a result, we feel paralyzed to improve anything. We begin to feel as if the world has forsaken us.

The most crucial thing for us to understand is that we will never feel good about the world we live in or about ourselves until we stop addressing suffering in terms of *specific, isolated incidents*. We will only reduce suffering if we treat suffering on this planet as a whole. We can only make an impact on suffering if we feel empowered instead of powerless. We can only make an impact if we

believe we *can* make an impact.

If you want to believe you can make an impact and, what's more, if you want to *start* actually making an impact, look at suffering as a whole instead of in parts. Instead of focusing on that one war that you feel like you can't do anything about, instead of focusing on isolated incidents that cause suffering, focus instead on suffering in and of itself, or at least on collective human suffering. Look at the big picture of suffering, which I believe is something we can have a direct, tangible impact on.

It is my belief that we need to take a vow to reduce collective suffering by adding to collective well-being every day in the ways that we can. There is an enormous difference between focusing on and resisting the problems and focusing on and going in the direction of a solution. You will know you are focusing on the solution when you feel emotionally empowered.

When we look at suffering as a whole, we soon realize that *our* suffering is a part of that collective suffering. It then becomes apparent that the most important thing we can do to reduce suffering in the world is to reduce our own suffering as individuals. I hope the Completion Process will help you do just that. We are linked to one another in a beautiful, albeit invisible, web that makes up all life. Because of this, it can be said that the single most important thing you will ever do for world suffering is to do whatever it takes to reduce your own suffering and enable yourself to feel joy. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for taking this step for yourself and, therefore, taking this step for us all.

APPENDIX A

Quick Reference Page: The Completion Process List of Steps

1. **Create a Safe Haven.** This needs to be done only once.
2. **Emotional Vipassana.** Exploring the feeling or trigger.
3. **Validate the Present Feeling.**
4. **Invite the Memory to Surface.**
5. **Re-Experience the Memory.** To be done in first-person perspective.
6. **Validate the Feeling within the Memory.**
7. **Step into Adult Perspective within the Memory.** Move from passively witnessing the memory to active visualization.
8. **Validate the Child's Emotions.**
9. **Await Relief.**
10. **Call Back Other Fractured Aspects of Self.**
11. **Meet the Child's Needs within the Memory.**
12. **Choice to Stay or Go.** Give the child the choice to stay within the now altered memory or go to the Safe Haven.
13. **Check for Completion.** If the child wishes to stay, repeat Steps 10–12 if necessary and bring the process to a close. Once the child opts to go to the Safe Haven, continue on to the next steps.
14. **Enter Safe Haven and Deactivate the Memory.** The memory the child was taken out of is then closed (shrunk or popped like a balloon).

15. **Create Purification and Healing.** Do this for the child or children to create distance between the past and the present.
16. **Meet the Child's Needs within the Safe Haven.** Meet whatever needs the child may have within the context of the Safe Haven. If incomplete, repeat Steps 2–15.
17. **Option to Stay or Merge.** Offer the child or children the option to stay in the Safe Haven or merge with the adult.
18. **Return to Conscious Perspective.**

APPENDIX B

Becoming a Completion Process Certified Practitioner (CPCP)

As you know now from reading this book, I am very much at peace with the concept that the Completion Process is one that you can use to heal yourself. You are the one with the power to put yourself back together again; your healing is not dependent on anyone else.

That being said, while I am confident that an outside facilitator isn't absolutely necessary for the majority of individuals in this world, I also know that there is comfort and benefit in having a trained practitioner to walk a person through the Completion Process, which is, without a doubt, a rather intense emotional experience. For this reason, I have chosen to create a certification course to train and certify practitioners of the Completion Process.

It is important to note that outside facilitation is recommended in specific circumstances, such as if someone has been involved in ritual trauma and was mentally programmed. For someone who faced this level of extreme abuse, they may not be familiar enough with their own programming to feel confident that the Completion Process will not set off a subconscious program. It might be possible in this case that a trigger could send them into a dissociative fugue state; therefore, I highly recommend that a certified practitioner be on hand to assist these individuals through the Completion Process.

Remember, your subconscious mind exists specifically to keep things from interfering with the conscious mind. Your subconscious mind is intact with all kinds of tricks, walls, barriers, and loopholes. A certified practitioner who attends and completes the certification course is trained to deal with these defenses that the subconscious mind erects. This helps the individual to progress completely through the process and not worry about fighting his or her own mind along the way.

I have found that very few people have had the opportunity to be truly

supported by unconditional, focused presence in their lives. The very experience of having someone be unconditionally present with us while we are going through our process is healing in and of itself. It also provides us with a support person we can call on if the process itself (or if our life) gets tough enough that we feel we need or would benefit from some assistance while going through the Completion Process.

All Completion Process Certified Practitioners are familiar with the process, not only because they have been trained to facilitate other people through the process, but also because they are committed to the process themselves. We are only capable of being completely, unconditionally present with other people if we have learned to be completely, unconditionally present with ourselves.

In the certification training course, we must develop a certain level of intuition and empathy in order to work with whoever might approach us for help. Because of the mental uniqueness that people exhibit, I know I could never write a comprehensive book about *everything* you might run into while facilitating this process. I can only speak about tendencies and then address unique circumstances with facilitators as they come up.

To learn more about the Completion Process, to find a practitioner in your area, or to find out more about becoming a Completion Process Certified Practitioner (CPCP), visit www.thecompletionprocess.com.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This process was birthed by years of desperately trying to find a way to put myself back together again. I am eternally grateful to so many people who have influenced me and helped me on this particular journey, including so many followers worldwide who continue to support the spiritual healing work that I now do. I truly thank you from the bottom of my heart.

With regard to the Completion Process specifically, I have discovered that a big part of putting myself back together again involved the unconditional presence of others, and it's my pleasure and honor to acknowledge them here.

The first person I would like to thank is my first ritual trauma therapist (who for the sake of her own safety must remain anonymous). I was delivered into her capable hands by a rape crisis center, and it's because of her that I reconnected with my own inner child and began the process of saving myself. I have never met a warmer or more empathetic therapist in all my life. Therapists who choose to stand as advocates of the victims of ritual abuse risk more of themselves than most people can imagine. Those of us who have benefited from this bravery are eternally grateful to you.

The second person I would like to thank is Lauren Stokes. Regardless of the challenges thrown in front of us, she has remained my most loyal and consistent friend. We became best friends as children. She was my only friend for years. Her dedication to people and her dedication to me is a thing of beauty.

The third person I would like to thank is Blake Dyer. Blake is the most unconditional person that I have ever met. After helping me escape from the abuse, he has been unconditionally with me ever since. Blake has been the bedrock that I built my new life upon; a bedrock without which none of this would have been possible.

The fourth person I would like to thank is Graciela Hernandez. She came into my life at a time when I needed support the most, and her unwavering heart has held me. I thank the Universe that she wandered into my life.

The fifth person I would like to thank is Ale Gicqueau, who came into my life as a result of using the Completion Process on myself to resolve my own deep

wounds of loneliness and shame. I have never met a man that is full of more unwavering faith in all my life. And I have never met a man more capable of love. *Je t'aime mon amour.*

The sixth person I would like to thank is my son, Winter. To be a mother to the innocence of his gentle soul, I had to face myself. I had to tie up the loose ends, and I had to commit to becoming the person I wanted him to remember me to be. For his sake, I decided that I had to find the answer to becoming whole, and so I did. He has been the single biggest catalyst for healing in my life. I hope that one day he grows up to feel the beauty of our destiny together as mother and son, as I do.

The seventh thank-you is to my parents. Some years ago, my mother was watching the Oscars, and she started crying as winner after winner came up on stage to thank their parents. She cried with the realization that I would never do that in tandem with a career success of my own. There has been unspeakable pain between us for years as a result of what happened in my childhood. And my career is largely focused on overcoming the harm done by parents. But my mother was wrong. I am now standing on stage, thanking my parents, because there is a bigger picture to the saga that has played out in our lives. Each one of us had a role in that saga and, therefore, what is to come as a result of it. All the pain that we have been through over the years has enabled us to completely go beyond the petty stuff. Our lives are rich with meaning. And as groovy, lifelong activists, their never-ending desire and commitment to create a better Earth will now be carried on . . . by me.

I would also like to thank Simone Graham, my wonderful editor, who has held my artistic hands through the process of structuring and polishing my works so they can be offered to the world.

And to all the clients and friends over the years who I have involved in my various experiments to try to find and design a process to rival all other processes, be assured the world will thank you for being open enough to participate in this quest with me. The nutty professor in me looks back on our time together with fond sentimentality. I will never forget a single one of you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Teal Swan is an internationally recognized spiritual leader and a powerful voice in the field of metaphysics. She was born with a range of extrasensory abilities, including clairvoyance, clairsentience, and clairaudience, and has led an extraordinary life. Teal survived 13 years of physical, mental, and sexual abuse before escaping her abuser at age 19 and beginning her own process of recovery and transformation.

Today she shares what she has learned with millions of people, teaching them how to find forgiveness, happiness, freedom, and self-love in their own lives. She does this through a wide range of online resources that are powerful and accessible, and through publications, frequency artwork, media interviews, and Synchronization workshops that she presents around the world. Her success has earned her the nickname “The Spiritual Catalyst.”

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